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Jeanne Tsatsos

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WOMEN OF BYZANTIUM

EMPRESS ATHENAIS-EUDOCIA

A FIFTH CENTURY BYZANTINE HUMANIST

by
JEANNE TSATSOS

translated by
JEAN DEMOS

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX PRESS
Brookline, Massachusetts

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TO THE GREEKS OF AMERICA

"Instill in us values . . ."

–IAKOVOS, Archbishop of America

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Holy Cross Orthodox Press is indeed delighted to bring to the English-speaking public the excellent study of an extraordinary woman, Empress Athenais-Eudocia of Byzantium, written by the distinguished author Mrs. Jeanne Tsatsos, wife of the President of Greece and sister of the Nobel Prize poet George Seferis.

Today, when studies on women are both necessary and popular, we are happy to add this volume as a contribution to the literature on women of the East, about whom little is presently known.

Thanks are due to His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Americas, for his interest and support in publishing this volume; to Professor Demetrios Constantelos, who read the manuscript; and to the eminent iconographer, Constantine Youssis, for his drawing of Athenais-Eudocia.

N. M. Vaporis
Director

PROLOGUE

If you know modern Greek I advise you to read the present book in its original edition. Not that Jean Demos' fluent and excellent translation is inadequate but because Jeanne Tsatsos' book in modern Greek reads like a beautiful poem. Both the style and spirit of the original *Athenais* are essentially poetic and very difficult to convey in another language.

Notwithstanding the literary merits of the present work, it is also good history. Of course the book is not intended for specialists. Nevertheless the author has read every source available and has put together all the information in her effort to reconstruct the life and thought of an outstanding but tragic personality. Byzantium produced many eminent women who played important roles in government (Pulcheria, Justinian's wife Theodora, Irene the eighth-century *basileus*), in literature (Kassia, Anna Commena), in the Church and in society (Deaconess Olympias, Sophia the wife of Justin II, Theodora the wife of Emperor Theophilos, Irene the wife of Emperor John II Commenos). Athenais-Eudocia is my favorite among Byzantine women not only because of her contributions to government, church, and society, but because she represents to me one of the best examples of the Byzantine intellectuals who hammered and produced the synthesis of Hellenic-Christian humanism of the Byzantine era.

Athenais-Eudocia lived on the borders of two worlds and she came to combine the best elements of them both. Highly intelligent and well educated in the Greek classics, she perceived that a new era was in the making. In her person we discover an excellent demonstration of the fusion that took place between Greek thought and

Christian faith. It was this fusion that eventually determined the nature of the Byzantine mind. Her conversion to Christianity did not expunge from her life the Greek wisdom which she had been taught by her philosopher father Leontios in her native Athens. And the Church, which acknowledged her contributions to both traditions, Greek and Christian, had no hesitation in canonizing her, placing her among its most illustrious daughters. Athenais-Eudocia's memory is honored every year on August 13.

When I first read Mrs. Tsatsos' book several years ago, I asked my student, the late Doros Loizos of Cyprus (a victim of the brutal Turkish invasion of his country) to read and see whether he would be able to translate it into English. Doros, who loved and himself wrote poetry, exploded in enthusiasm: "This is more than history, this is beautiful poetry." For several reasons the translation did not materialize at that time. I was pleased, however, that in the meantime it was translated by Mrs. Jean Demos, who had rendered the English translation of Mrs. Tsatsos' moving book *The Sword's Fierce Edge* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

It is indeed with pleasure that I strongly recommend this book to both students of Byzantine Civilization and other interested laymen. They will enjoy reading it as a work of art, as well as history and psycho-biography. Furthermore, this is a valuable contribution to the study of Byzantine women.

Demetrios J. Constantelos
Professor of History and Religious Studies
Stockton State College

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

I have tried to study Athenais as a historical figure and to draw near her as a tragic human personality. I say tragic because the depth of each man's suffering is in proportion to his refinement of spirit, and I believe that Athenais truly drained the cup of earthly grief.

Unfortunately, we have almost come to accept the injustice of life. Let us avoid as far as possible the injustice and oblivion of history.

This queen sustained Byzantium at the outset. She helped effectively to establish both its intellectual foundations and its defensive power. The chroniclers pass over her quickly. But the few definite statements which they make are substantial data from which we may hope to find the unknown which we seek. For this reason I record the basic sources.

I have written in the hope that, traveling among the structures and the ruins of history, I may draw near the truth about Athenais.

J.T.

CHAPTER 1

The story begins at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century after the birth of Christ. The Hellenic and Hellenized Roman Empire of the East, with the city of Constantinople as its capital, was separating itself from the West. There Hellenism met Christianity. Deep fermentations, new ideas and forms, other ways of life emerged. Year by year the old Greek colony of Byzantium was becoming a new Rome, and a new city—Constantinople—a new synthesis of Greek, Roman, and Christian traits.

Change is certainly the nature of history, whether evolution or revolution. But during that epoch a wild cyclone was uprooting all that was precious. Alaric, Attila, monsters out of the Apocalypse, invaded the civilized countries of the Mediterranean with their hordes; fires, persecutions, murders and the displacement of peoples tranformed whole states. The highest values, respected for over a thousand years, were submerged and transformed. A new civilization would emerge later, much later, but at what price?

There was unbearable suffering. Spiritual men were fragmented, annihilated by overwhelming sorrow.

The background of the whole century was darkened by the dust raised by the galloping horses of the Goths and the Huns and the Vandals. How could the Empire

resist the attack of those barbarians coming down from the steppes? Could it not at least be united? Fanatical theologians supported heresies, dividing Christ's Church and the entire state. And the dialectical talent of the Greeks, so creative in the pursuit of philosophical truth, dried up; when it concerned religion, it ended in dogmatic discussion full of animosity.

Worldly power was unrestrained. Criminals and disgraceful men like the eunuch Eutropios* surrounded the emperors and incited them to orgies and villainies. The state's high positions were bought and sold. Tax collectors, harsh and unjust, with their passion for quick wealth, were no better than cruel murderers. The crimes were hair-raising.

But out of the abyss of evil, from within the irresponsible masses, emerged some men of quality, men who thirsted for justice. It was they who would elevate a saint, John Chrysostom, to the archepiscopal throne. It was they who would persuade Synesios, though married, to become Bishop of Ptolemais.

In order to better understand the atmosphere of this historic period, let us stop for a moment with these two famous men. Everyone, wherever he happens to be, puts a stamp on his era. These two had their Greek education as a basis and their Christian faith as a motive. They both struggled until death to preserve the age-old values which were sinking in the savagery around them. On the threshold of the ancient world, these men, Greeks that they were, rose up to serve Christ's commands with all the wisdom of the long civilization to which they belonged.

St. John Chrysostom was born in the great Hellenistic city of Antioch in 344. His father, the patrician Secundus,

a well-known officer, died before his time. His mother, the Christian Anthusa, became a widow at twenty and did not marry again. She devoted herself to her son. As his tutor she chose Livanios, the famous sophist, who taught him classical literature and rhetoric. But the spirit of Chrysostom, aflame with the search for truth, could be set free only by Christ. "Blessed are they who thirst after righteousness," and Chrysostom had a passion for righteousness.

The Church was searching in those days for moral and spiritual personalities. It believed itself to be the only refuge for the faithful in the insecurity and depravity of the age. It needed men who would accept their responsibilities bravely, men of high moral caliber and culture. It appealed to Chrysostom. He was christened by Meletios, the Patriarch of Antioch, and spent the next six years closed in a monastery, undergoing severe privations. Then the same Meletios ordained him a deacon by the laying on of hands.

In the great and wealthy city of Antioch, this Athens of the East, the inhabitants spoke Greek. The education of children began with the study of Greek writers and of rhetoric. But they were baptized in the name of Christ and received instruction in the Christian teachings. Among such listeners there was a great demand for good oratory. Chrysostom preached there for twenty-two full years. The faithful adored him.

In 397 Nektarios, the Patriarch of Constantinople, died. The people of the capital wanted the famous Chrysostom to succeed him. The palace agreed. In February of 398, John was enthroned as Patriarch, and gave the royal city a great example of faith and virtue. Crowds were drawn to his sermons. Day after day his

personality filled their souls; but his responsibilities were very great. He had to wrestle with injustice, with self-interest, and with hypocrisy. He was the high priest. The king was powerless.

When the civil government is ineffective, alas if the Church does not stand for justice and fill the vacuum.

In 399 Gainas, the leader of the Goths, entered Constantinople as conqueror and proclaimed himself general of the army. Gainas then demanded the execution of Eutropios, and Arcadios signed the condemnation. Eutropios sought refuge in the Church, asking for protection from John Chrysostom. The Patriarch offered it freely, with his famous speech "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Where are now the brilliant garments of the spectators."* Gainas also asked for a church of his own so that his Arian Goths could worship there. The Emperor Arcadios was ready to give it to him. But Chrysostom drew himself up to his full height and refused. Then the people of the royal city courageously took their stand beside their patriarch and expelled the foreigners. The terrified Gainas fled to a point far from the capital, and was killed by the Huns.

The faithful were drawn to the high priest as shipwrecked men are drawn to the light from a lighthouse. And when John went further and condemned the extravagance of the Empress herself, again the people went along with him.

Eudoxia, the wife of Arcadios, was the daughter of Bauto of France. Immoral, insatiable in her violent passions, she exploited the intrigues woven day and night by courtiers and eunuchs to satisfy their illicit desires.

She hated Chrysostom, but she did not have the power to unseat him. When she tried to send him into exile her throne tottered. The first time she conspired with the Patriarch of Alexandria, Theophilos.* He came to the city of Chalcedon opposite Constantinople with other bishops and many strong-armed sailors. There they convened a synod which tried Chrysostom and deposed him; the Emperor Arcadios immediately signed their decree. They arrested the Patriarch of Constantinople and took him in chains to the Asiatic shore opposite the city. As soon as the people learned of this they perceived the hatred and deceit behind the action. Supported by the army they rose up and demanded their bishop. The clergy, the sailors of Theophilos, and indeed Theophilos himself, were in danger and disappeared from the face of the earth. Seeing the danger to their throne, Arcadios and Eudoxia revoked the decision to unseat the Patriarch.

But when Chrysostom, indignant at these impudent injustices and lack of respect for the Church, delivered his famous speech "Again Herodias goes mad," the frenzied Empress dared to conspire with the Goths, who hated him. On Easter Saturday in 404 she allowed them to enter the royal city, to storm the Great Church, to drive out the crowds, and to arrest the Patriarch. This time the barbarians hunted down the rebellious populace. They set the cathedral afire. They bound Chrysostom and sent him to Cucusos on Mount Tauros. There, though he was a captive, his enemies were afraid of him and trembled before him. He was always fearless. They persuaded Arcadios to send him to a far-off desert. But Chrysostom's frail body could not sustain the great hardships, and on the way he gave up his spirit.

Such is the great mystery of the priestly calling.

* * * * *

How long had they to endure the evil-doers and the aliens...

The pain Synesios felt went beyond the boundaries of Cyrene. He came to the royal city as his nation's ambassador. He saw the Emperor Arcadios and spoke to him with both sorrow and pride about Cyrene. "Cyrene sends me to you, a Greek city, with an old and noble name, lauded in thousands of odes by the wise ancients, but now impoverished and unfortunate."*

Synesios' parents were rich Greeks of noble birth. In the authentic Greek tradition he went to study in Alexandria, where he heard the lectures of the philosopher Hypatia. The harmony of the good penetrated deeply into his soul. He married, returned to his country, and for a little while dared to be happy with his wife whom he loved. But how could he be happy with so much misery around him?

Synesios gave wise advice to Emperor Arcadios concerning the whole Empire. First he spoke of national conscription:* the Goths must finally stop exploiting the army. But what incompetent ruler listens to hard advice? The Emperor was indifferent.

The philosopher's prestige won over the conscience of the elite. He was just; he was brave; he was wise. The entire clergy and laity of Ptolemais firmly demanded that he be the leader of their church. But his high conception of a bishop's calling made him unwilling to accept. He declared humbly that he was not worthy. He would neither leave his wife nor abandon philosophy.

Nonetheless, the pressure was very great, and Synesios finally accepted the burdensome office. He was baptized and consecrated at the same time in 409.

As bishop he embraced the Christians with loving concern. He wanted to protect them, and would not accept their misfortune. The cowardly governor, Andronikos, oppressed them and persecuted them. Though Synesios demanded of the governor that he respect the citizens, he was insatiable, and had only one thought—to amass a fortune by collecting taxes.

The Church was an asylum, always open to suppliants. But Andronikos was a wild beast and disregarded this. At noon, when the city was deserted because of the great heat, he dragged from all the churches all those who had taken sanctuary there. He tortured them to suck from them even what they did not have. At this point Synesios decided to excommunicate him.* Excommunication was a great curse, both in this life and the next. The governor lost the Emperor's favor and was severely punished.

Wild men from Africa were coming down toward the seashore. Ptolemais and Cyrene were their objectives.* Their raids occurred repeatedly. Bishop Synesios confronted them alone, fighting almost as if he were the last soldier.* His hopeless cry was the conscious and tragic despair of a great civilization which was sinking.

From his inferno, out of his longing for better days, he wrote to Hypatia, beginning with a line from the *Iliad*:

> And even if the dead in Hades completely forget, I shall remember there my friend Hypatia.* I who am engulfed in my country's sorrows suffer as I see the enemy daily attacking and slaughtering men

like victims for the sacrifice, polluting the air with rotting bodies and I expect to suffer the same fate myself. What is there to hope for, when the country stands thus afflicted, covered by the shadows of flesh-eating vultures? But this is where I want to be.

It was indeed where he wanted to be, and he was killed for it. We do not know how and when.* Ptolemais was saved, but soon Cyrene was entirely overrun by the barbarians.

Such were the Christian philosophers who fought fearlessly for mankind. The spirit, expanded by long study, received Christ's teaching in all its fullness. Such are the very few from among primitive and amoral men who feel deeply their human obligation. They struggle, they sacrifice themselves, they are lost—points of light in the darkness, they show the way to the eternal surge of humanity.

CHAPTER II

In Athens during those same years the Olympian gods were not yet dead. The world which Pausanias describes in his *Travels* was very much alive.

Athena's city was the great university city.* Philosophers, orators, mathematicians gathered there to teach and to be taught. It was full of masterpieces of art, full of monuments, and everyone respected it. Athena, the Promachos, erect on her pedestal on the Acropolis, still protected her city and ordered her faithful warrior Achilles to drive off Alaric with his Goths and the Aryan monks who were showing him the way.*

So the barbarians passed by without touching the city. To be sure there was great devastation nearby. They destroyed the Eleusinian sanctuaries, Demetra's temple. But the Goths went away, and the university slowly began to blossom again; the rhythm of study came to life once more. The great plane trees continued to give shade to the Academy. The Athenian Plutarch* taught Neo-Platonism, the new Greek philosophical system. Homer, Aeschylus, Socrates lived in the students' imagination. Young men strolled among the monuments, on the Pnyx, at the Prytanium, along the Ilissos, arguing as their elders had argued.

Young people came there to study, from the provinces of Asia and Africa, from Europe. Gregory of Nazianzos studied in Athens, and, as he himself admitted, managed to go away only by great effort.* There was also the wise Alexandrian woman Hypatia.

In this Athens, about 400, a daughter was born to the philosopher Leontios, who taught rhetoric at the Academy. Her parents felt an obligation to give her the name of the city's protector, Pallas-Athena, and so they called her Athenais.

Leontios was rich. His house at the base of the Acropolis was well-known. Ionic columns surrounded its great courtyard. Two carved fountains dripped their moisture onto the climbing jasmine. Even during the great heat of summer, Leontios remained in Athens. There he carried on discussions with his friends. The thick climbing vines gave them shade. And there was always some zephyr, some sea-breeze from Phaleron blowing to refresh them. And there the breath of ideas was also blowing.

Little Athenais grew up in this courtyard, scattering grace and joy around her. She grew up hearing the verses of Homer and of Pindar, and she memorized them easily. Rhythm was instinctive with her. She grew up, marveling at the Sacred Rock when at sunset it lit up, turned red, then slowly faded away.

Her father adored her. In the beginning she was for him all grace and childish beauty. Then he began to enjoy her spirit, her quick understanding, her ready response. And when his wife died, this girl of twelve years became his comfort. She became a little mother for the older children. She looked after the house, after her father, and he on his part devoted all his

leisure hours to her. Rhetoric, poetry, and philosophy were her regular lessons. At the same time he instilled in her the Socratic virtue of self-knowledge, of moderation. In this way Athenais grew up in a rare intellectual atmosphere of truth and civility.

What a great privilege it was to have at one's disposal for the education of children the most perfect language in the world! How many men of genius had worked with it, had used it! In this language had been set forth the grandeur of thought with its many nuances, the passions and the fluctuations of feelings. The mere use of such a means of expression educates and disciplines. Later came the wonderful texts, each of which contained a rich world of wisdom and art. In what high spheres of poetry and dialectic this philosopher's daughter passed her time! Truly Athenais' greatest good fortune was to be a Greek and to have Leontios for a father.

During that period many other eminent men brought up their daughters in a similar way. The mathematician Theos had passed on his wisdom to his daughter Hypatia; likewise the Athenian Neo-Platonist Plutarch to Asclepiyenia.* But Leontios was a many-faceted personality. Along with the teaching of logic and the ancient texts, he was always greatly concerned with the movement of the stars and the relation between them. Hours on end he studied the star-studded firmament. He drew conclusions about the future and seemed to foresee his daughter's great destiny. A metaphysical belief in the fate and personality of Athenais guided him. With special diligence he prepared her for her historic role.

* * * * *

And now what would happen? The girl gazed in silent wonder at her dead father. Everything was lost, everything died with him. Until then he had been her only support. Whatever of significance she knew, she had known through him. She stood beside him and took stock of her debt to him; tears poured from her brimming eyes. Had the wise Leontios really died? Many stood beside his body, students and friends. And all could not help but marvel at Athenais, who remained motionless, erect, grief-stricken, with the utmost grace in her bearing.

This difficult day of separation passed, and the cold burial was over. Seated around the table, she and her brothers read their rich father's last will and testament. But how strange! The document stated something entirely unexpected: "I leave all my property to my sons Valerian and Gision. As for my beloved Athenais, I order them to assign one hundred coins only . . . Sufficient for her is her destiny which will be the greatest of any woman."*

Athenais was dumbfounded, embittered. To think that her father would set down such a will as that! That she should be disinherited! Could she live on a hundred coins? And this great fortune to come? When would it come? Until then what would become of her? She begged her brothers to be just, to divide the property into three parts, because she had done nothing to deserve disinheritance. But the two of them answered that they would respect the will of the dead man, and they sent her away.*

She looked once again around the beloved paternal home, her home. From childhood she had looked after it. The roses blooming against the grey stone walls,

the wisteria, the fountains—all these things, so much her own, so much a part of her growing up—all these now indifferent to her, remote. She felt no pain, no despair. A grief like death possessed her. Quickly she took whatever she had and went to her mother's sister, who received her kindly and advised her to go to Constantinople to ask justice from the Emperor. Leontios' sister was established in the royal city and would gladly offer her hospitality.

In haste the girl took leave of bright Athens with its ancient statues. Her father was no longer alive; her brothers had chased her away. Only a few weeks before carefree and happy, she would lose herself in endless arguments with them. Now everything was alien. Would she ever again see the land of Pallas-Athena?

She left for Constantine's famous city, the administrative center of a vast empire composed of countries with a long history and civilization. The city of marble palaces where they had gathered the treasures of West and East. The city of dirty, poverty-stricken neighborhoods and confused crowds of people, primitive, crude, passionate. Now in the spring of 420, Athenais, the daughter of the philosopher Leontios, arrived there in search of justice.

CHAPTER III

Theodosios II had been reigning there since 408. His father Arcadios had died, and Theodosios became Emperor at the age of seven. His mother Eudoxia, whom Chrysostom had called by the name of Herodias, had been the cause of that holy man's exile. She too was no longer alive. The five orphans, Theodosios and his sisters, were alone, surrounded by a dissolute court, with no strong relative beside them. Their uncle Honorius was emperor of the Western Empire. At one point he had thought to go to Constantinople in person to set up a loyal guardianship for his nephew, but there were such disturbances in the West that any such movement on his part was impossible. Apparently it was God's will that the orphan boy should be preserved on his father's throne.

The Empire was girdled by so many dangers and there were so many unbridled ambitions at work that it seemed a miracle. And a most unlikely rumor was circulated to explain it: they said that Arcadios in his will had entrusted the guardianship of his son to his noble enemy, Jezdegerd, the King of the Persians; that Jezdegerd, friendly to the Christians, sent from his court a prudent man, Antiochos, to serve as mentor to the royal orphans; that Antiochos stayed four years in the city, fulfilled his mission, and then returned to Isfahan.*

All this was certainly possible in that era. But there were in Byzantium also honorable men who could help the orphans through that difficult period and save them.

First of all there was the wise Atticos,* Patriarch of Constantinople from 406. The people admired and loved him for his saintliness. He studied the sacred books day and night; his faith was great. He had the persuasiveness of a fine orator. Naturally, this man, a true Christian, would look after the orphaned children since their father Arcadios was dead. He tried immediately to throw out the adventurers and schemers left from the previous dissolute reign. He himself undertook with ardor the education of the children in the Christian faith. He expounded the religious texts to them. He taught them to love and to fear God.

The influence of Atticos was apparent in the entire reformation of life in the palace. How else would the children of the conceited Eudoxia have acquired their fanatical concern for holy things? Who else would have had the prestige and the faith to inspire austere Christian virtue in these royal children, surrounded as they were by vile examples?

It was the Patriarch who formed their young souls. He saw that Pulcheria, the eldest,* was by far the most intelligent of them and influenced the others. Therefore his main concern was for her. The girl followed his every word of advice. In 416 Atticos dedicated to her and her sisters his treatise "Concerning faith and virginity,"* and Pulcheria vowed officially to God that she would not marry. Christians could see this vow of hers written on the gold and diamond-encrusted altar in the old church of Saint Sophia. And her sisters, who admired her and made her their example, did the same.

The Patriarch did not like to see the princesses idle. When they were not singing hymns, not praying, not studying, they occupied themselves with embroidery. Under Atticos' guidance the palace really became a convent.

* * * * *

At the same time, the Prefect of Praetorium, Anthemios, was governing the country; "The most prudent of men" the chroniclers were to call him.* Anthemios was indeed a brave and sensible man. During the few years in which the envy of men allowed him to govern, he accomplished significant things. He drove the Huns out of Thrace, and destroyed their rear guard. All the prisoners he took—and they were many—he established on the plains of Asia, making them into farmers. In 413 he surrounded Constantinople on the land side with strongly fortified walls. But the other important men of the royal city were jealous and forced him out of office. They chose as prefect the aged Aurelian, who had been the great opponent of Gainas, the Goth.

Thus, thanks to these two important personalities, the early deaths of Arcadios and Eudoxia benefited both their children and the Empire.

* * * * *

Pulcheria, Theodosios' sister, was scarcely fifteen years old when she became guardian of the young Emperor. It seems like a fairy tale that a young girl should

direct the Empire in such times. But the prestige of the dynasty was great, and so was the young woman's good sense. Her subjects respected and obeyed her. Pulcheria had all the saintliness of a devout Christian, but she also had many compulsive worldly passions. Her political acumen was remarkably developed. From the time she was a small child, she had understood, as had her grandfather Theodosios the Great, that the Church and its unity were her strength. Her religious nature enabled her to help it spread its roots deeply in Christian Byzantium. The clergy and the monasteries followed her and supported her.

In accord with the custom of the era, the royal children, and most of all Pulcheria, studied the classical authors along with Christian dogma. They were taught both Latin and Greek. There were always famous Greek scholars in Byzantium. Pagan grammarians, like Helladios and Ammonios, had fled from Alexandria and had come to teach in the royal city.

On July 4, 414 the young Emperor Theodosios gave his sister the title of Augusta, and with it the right to share the rule with him. Pulcheria had then both education and strong Christian principles. But she had another great passion which had also been her mother's—the passion for power. Hers was a strong personality, and no one, neither the Emperor nor her sisters, could hold an opposite opinion to hers. This passion for power intoxicated her, gave her strength. The kind of influence she exerted on the young Emperor showed how much she herself always wanted to govern. She looked after his manners, his morals, his education. She surrounded him with young friends who were cultured and honorable. But she allowed him

to be indolent, a stranger to the affairs of the Empire. Theodosios put his signature to whatever documents she presented to him, without even pretending to read them.*

Thus the Emperor Theodosios grew up, innocent, pious, indifferent. He was educated in the arts and the sciences. He learned horsemanship; he liked to hunt. His sister would see to it that he was taught how to dress, to carry himself with royal dignity; to be serene or severe, according to the occasion. How to sit on the throne and receive the Senate and the nobles. How to go in his regalia to the hippodrome on a gold chariot drawn by white horses. How to wear his pearl-studded crown.* As he grew up, he would surely develop his own tastes, his personal habits. But to the end of his life he would live under the influence of someone else. He would never have an opinion of his own. Pulcheria governed, then Athenais, then again Pulcheria and the eunuch Chrysaphios. This was why what he did was so uneven, often contradictory; sometimes great, sometimes criminal. Fortunately, in the beginning of his reign his bosom friend and fellow-student was the patrician Paulinos, the son of a high officer in the imperial guard.* Possessed of nobility and cultivation of spirit, he loved Theodosios like a brother. No ulterior motive clouded his thinking.

* * * * *

In that royal city,* in the home of her father's sister, the orphan Athenais waited for Augusta Pulcheria to grant her an audience. Days passed; no word came from the palace. How long could she live like

that in this busy city? What decision would determine her fortune? Leontios' sister comforted her. "Don't be in such a hurry, my child. Great patience is needed before Augustus receives you. Officers from the provinces sometimes wait years. And we are obscure folk."

The girl did not know how to fill her time. Unknown, she went about the city. Squares and still larger squares, some four-sided, others polygonal. High on an arch she saw the two pillars of Constantine and his mother, between them a cross. She spent whole hours in the endless porticoes. She strolled in the baths of Zeuxippos because she found collected there famous statues from her native land. Thoughtful Homer, Sappho, Plato, Aristotle, and the beautiful Helen, whose beauty still charmed even in bronze.* She felt that they too were exiles like herself. "What are we all doing here in this incomprehensible country?" she wondered. In her difficult hours of loneliness and insecurity she went to the hippodrome, to the tripod of the Pythian Apollo, which they had brought from Delphi. It was the dedication of the Greeks after the victory of Plataea. From Apollo the Athenian girl asked enlightenment and a way out. She did this from habit. She no longer believed in the old gods; she did not know the new one. Deserted, lost, she tried to catch the rhythm of the throbbing city.

How full of life was the great international port near the market! Countless ships, always loaded, coming and going; they unloaded merchandise from all parts of the world—from Persia, Arabia, the West. Strange colors, faces, costumes. Rich Asiatics dressed in silk and gold. Formal Roman patricians with their servants, showing off as if it were a ceremony just to walk through the

street. Beggars, paupers, ragged, mutilated, gestures and grimaces. Clergy of high standing, barefoot monks hurried by. Her genuine Hellenic spirit was confused by the varied mosaic of her daily life in this city.

In order to cheat the waiting, she studied the new city. Not a hundred years ago Constantine the Great had begun to build the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. On the shore of Thrace he chose this magic spot where Europe and Asia seem to unite, so narrow is the sea which separates them. He chose this historic rampart with its seven hills, Byzantium, contested by Athens and Sparta for years, and besieged by Philip of Macedonia in vain. In this unique location the Emperor built the New Rome. It too had its capitol, its palace, its hippodrome. All these, enriched with basilicas, theaters, and baths, showed the Emperor's nostalgia and admiration for his old capital.

But eventually the Asiatic populations which poured in daily, each one with the stamp of its own civilization, mingled with the Greeks and Romans and contributed to the the shaping of new aesthetic forms. How beautiful in their proportions were the churches! The Holy Apostles and that of St. John on the Evdomon,* built by Theodosios the Great.

Athenais lived every aspect of the new city which was being born; and she was more and more enchanted. It seemed to her that she too, lost in the crowd, with her father's sister who was always beside her, felt the strong pulse of a powerful life which day by day increased and swept her along with it. She felt deeply that times had changed, that the center of history was now here, that her beloved Athens was being thrust aside.

Then one morning the message finally arrived in which Pulcheria fixed the day of the audience. At last a way out. Athenais prepared herself. In the short time which Augusta would grant her, she must explain her problem, briefly and accurately. Everyone spoke of the very intelligent Pulcheria. She wanted to be worthy of the honor granted her. With beating heart she started for the palace.

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On the western shore of the Bosporos, at the edge of ancient Byzantium, between the green of the orchards and the blue of the sea, Constantine the Great had built his sacred palace. If she had been in another mood, Athenais would have marveled at the new rhythms, the variety and luxury of the royal city. Churches, mansions, porticoes, and hanging gardens created an original composition.

Courtiers conducted the two women from the narrow gate of the golden hand to the Augustan chamber. Athenais was so dazzled by the great shining cross in the dome of the hall that she could hardly see. She went forward mechanically, following the courtiers. At the end she beheld a young woman in black seated on a high throne. The cross in gold shone on her breast. This was Augusta Pulcheria.

Athenais made a deep bow and then stood erect, in the perfection of her body. The two women looked at each other. Pulcheria was astounded at such beauty. Athenais was moved, certain that the figure in black she was facing was her own fate. And indeed she was Fate itself.

The maid of Athens spoke, and her charm was felt throughout the great hall. Every word was full of truth, and had exactly the right connotation; the meaning poured forth clearly. And her voice was strangely attractive. Pulcheria could hardly believe such perfection. For so many months she had been searching throughout the land to find a woman worthy to reign with Theodosios, and now suddenly, what she was looking for stood here before her.*

She told Athenais to sit down; she descended from the throne, and with a queenly step left the hall. The moment she could no longer be seen she hastened her steps and ran to the Emperor's apartments. She found him there with his fellow-student Paulinos. This dedicated friend had been away for some time, traveling throughout the Empire. He too had been looking for the loveliest woman to be the Emperor's wife. Disenchanted, he explained to Theodosios that the most beautiful ones were empty-headed and inexpressive.

For the first time the formal Pulcheria was perturbed as she entered the study. Quickly she began to describe to the young men the wonderful creature who was waiting for her in the throne-room. "I found her young, pure, modest, fine-featured, with a well-proportioned nose, a complexion white as snow, large eyes, curly blond hair, little feet, also educated, a Greek virgin."

Naturally, these words fell like seeds into the king's heart. Theodosios was excited; he stood up and asked to see her immediately. With a thousand precautions Pulcheria led the two young men behind a thick curtain. From there they could easily see and hear the girl. Then Augusta Pulcheria resumed her royal gait and

proceeded back to her throne. She continued her questions. Suspecting nothing, Athenais answered in her musical voice. The Emperor saw and heard, and was enchanted.

The demanding Paulinos was in a better position to judge the worth of the perfect creature who was now before them. From the first moment he sensed beneath her beautiful figure and her cultivated speech the rare nobility of a free human being. Wholeheartedly he urged the Emperor to make her his wife.

Augusta Pulcheria reassured Athenais. She promised that she would present her cause favorably, and that she would arrange for her an interview with the Emperor.

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Now Theodosios waited impatiently for the day, the hour when he would see her again. But he accepted the decision of his careful sister that the meeting should not take place immediately. They must learn more about the young woman. Influenced by the Patriarch Atticos and the atmosphere of the palace, he gave primary importance to the girl's purity. But all the time he was waiting, he was preparing himself. He was reading the Greek authors; he was speaking with Paulinos only in Greek. He wanted to speak to her easily in her own language, so that he should not be inferior to her in anything.

Plans were made. She would be received in the great Triklino of the Magna Aula. The entire hall and the columns which supported the arches were made of marble. The imposing royal throne had six steps and a golden lion on either side. The order was given that the

golden seats of the hall where the crowns and mantles usually rested were to be empty. The wonderful curtains were to be closed. In the corners were to be placed Greek works of art which Paulinos himself would select. Thus she would find the hall imposing but familiar.

During this interval Augusta Pulcheria was gathering all possible information about Athenais' family and conduct. Secret missions were sent to Athens to learn all they could about Leontios' family and about the girl herself. Her aunts were questioned by trusted people from the palace to be sure once more that the young woman was chaste, that until now her only concern had been study.

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The story continues like a fairy tale. All the information agreed with the enamored Emperor's desire. The program was carried out without obstacle, and the great moment arrived. Augustus would receive the poor daughter of the rich Leontios. Seated on his high throne he waited for her with beating heart. He wore his crown with pearls and his purple robes. Around him were courtiers, nobles and Paulinos.

They ushered in the proud suppliant. Athenais approached timidly. Brought up in Greek simplicity, all this eastern splendor was strange to her. She bowed in silence. Then she drew herself up and looked at the Emperor. He too rose for a moment. He was handsome, of medium height, with large lively eyes.* Excited, he asked her most sympathetically about her circumstances. She began to describe them, gradually gaining courage. He asked her endless details about her life, about her

studies, about the writers whom she preferred. The courtiers and Paulinos stood by in silence, like an ancient chorus. The atmosphere was ceremonious, as was everything relating to the Emperor in the sacred palace.* But how did he look at her? As if his whole soul were shining out of his big eyes.

Athenais sensed vaguely that this was a sacred moment. She was embarrassed, but she answered the Emperor's questions prudently.

Why was the etiquette so rigid? They had to separate. The courtiers came forward. The Emperor assured her officially that she would be vindicated. She thanked him, bowed, withdrew. He followed with admiration even to her last movement. Two children twenty years old, dazzled by the mystery of life.*

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At home she talked with her father's sister. Her aunt suspected the palace's plans; she prepared her. She was herself a Christian, settled for years in the royal city. She spoke to her about Christ, about the dedication of the royal children to the new faith. "The earth has thrown out the roots of the ancient gods. Every day increases the living current which brings men to accept the official religion of the Empire." Athenais listened, neither accepting nor refusing. She was in mid-air between her traditions and her hopes.

But the next day a tall, handsome man in the uniform of a high court officer and with royal manners asked to see her. It was Paulinos, the brother-friend of the Emperor. Officially, on behalf of Theodosios, he asked

if she would agree to become a Christian and the Empress of Byzantium. Without allowing her to consider, he explained to her what a high mission hers could be in those difficult times. How much Byzantium, the very center of history, needed a true woman beside its king. And Athenais, deeply moved, accepted the proposal.

Did not the wise Leontios have the gift of prophecy?

CHAPTER IV

From that moment the daughter of the Athenian philosopher, with regal step, entered history, bringing with her to her new country the best of Greece.

In the royal enclosure, within the palace of Daphne and Magna Aula, they were preparing Athenais' apartments. Silk fabrics from the East adorned the walls and the seats. Many-colored mosaics covered the floors. The faithful Paulinos looked after everything; day by day he kept the impatient Emperor informed.

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The first obligation of Athenais was to present herself to the Patriarch Atticos, who received her with holy simplicity. The old prelate had great human experience; he saw that she was different. He wanted her to follow the good way toward Christ, to receive His teachings directly into her heart. He was afraid of the passing of time, of the dust which it would leave on the brilliance of the sacred texts. He himself would initiate her.

So their daily dialogue began, on the essential theme of one God. A thick veil was torn from Athenais' eyes. The horizon which spread before her had the force of revelation. A simple man spoke, without

making a revolution, without abolishing anything, and the very essence of the world was changed. Here, mind and learning were not needed. Only a boundless heart to receive Him completely. "Blessed are they that mourn." "Another commandment give I unto you, that ye should love one another." The proud *Logos* of the Greeks and the severe Jehovah stepped aside respectfully before this trumpet-call of compassion for the overflowing pain of humanity.

And this commandment God Himself gave from His Cross. By His total sacrifice, truth covered the earth,* and this truth is our salvation.

With her whole soul Athenais answered this call. In her sure, open acceptance of the first values, she was overwhelmed by the divinity of Christ. She studied His words; she lived by His precepts: "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you"; "Enter in at the strait gate," and many others.

Christ's participation in the suffering, even in the weakness of mankind, touched her deeply. She read and read again the extract about Lazarus, the tears which He shed for His friend. With what divine simplicity He quietly answered the Pharisees: "He that is without sin among us, let him cast the first stone," then bowed His head in silence. "Has no man condemned thee? Then neither do I condemn thee." It is God who shares with patience in the substance of the world and suffers with it.

In order to understand the references, she studied the Bible. Its poetry, its prophecies entered into her heart. She sensed the toil of a chosen people to keep intact throughout the ages the idea of the One God.

And slowly Athenais climbed to Christ's vision. A

metaphysical understanding united her with her beginning and her end. All of life and death were contained in the mystery of self-giving. Now she was no longer a creature tossed back and forth between harsh people, neither was she the daughter of Leontios nor the Empress of Byzantium. She was Athenais who leaned on Christ. She closed her eyes for a moment; she saw her brothers far away, Pulcheria austere, Theodosios gazing at her with longing, Paulinos smiling at her. She felt a deep peace. The venerable Atticos, bent under years of Christian responsibility, gave her his blessing. She was ready. He baptized her and gave her the imperial name, Aelia Eudocia.* Her godmother was Pulcheria.

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The ladies-in-waiting and the eunuchs came and went quietly in the sacred palace.* Some held vari-colored fabrics; others carried furnishings of rare value. Skilled artisans were at work. They painted lively new pictures on the walls. They cut new windows in places arranged artistically to reveal plane trees and running water and the sea, statues, nymphs, and archers.

The palace, until now a monastery, changed its attitude and decked itself in holiday attire. Sun and color poured in, an expectation of great happiness. The severe Pulcheria smiled. Her brother's joy was her own work. The first lady-in-waiting and the mistress of the wardrobe gave orders. Courtiers hurried about, offering their services.

The Emperor communicated with Athenais every day. Sometimes he sent notes with Paulinos; sometimes he

saw her himself. Each time he was more taken with her charm. Without being haughty, she had that sure grace which is conferred by spirit and the assurance of beauty.

Finally it was June, 421. The great day had arrived. On the seventh of the month* the elaborate ceremonies began. Athenais was given over to the women to adorn her. They put on the purple mantle, the veil, the necklaces, the clasps. She was left to her generous destiny as to the sun. She knew the program of this official day. She carried it out with ease.

First the Emperor and Pulcheria, seated on their thrones in the Augustan chamber, received the court. One by one the courtiers passed to greet their majesties and retired to the *onopodio*, to their places.

Then the Patriarch approached the Emperor dressed in his gold vestments. Something of great significance was about to happen. The curtains of the octogonal chamber slowly opened and like an angel from heaven invincible Athenais moved forward. Not a breath was heard; motionless, dazzled, all stood in wonder. She bowed to Augustus, bowed to Augusta Pulcheria. Theodosios stood up proudly; he looked into her eyes and placed the royal crown on her golden hair. The Patriarch blessed her.*

Now the procession of the courtiers greeted the new queen. One by one the wives of the officials bowed and then turned toward the gate of the golden hand. There they waited behind the thick curtain for the Empress to pass.

Now Athenais, carrying a lighted candle, came out on the balcony to greet the people, The chief eunuch, the patricians, the senators, their wives, formed a semicircle behind. The two parties, the Greens and the Blues,

were there. With the candle in her hand she was like a Byzantine icon as she bowed gracefully. The flags dipped to salute her. The people, beside themselves with enthusiasm, shouted: "Long live the glory of the purple; long live the joy of the world!"

The officers also cheered. And again the parties shouted: "May you live long! May your years be many!" Athenais bowed to the people, to the partisans, to the nobles. Then with slow graceful steps she went forward to the throne room. There Theodosios waited to conduct her to St. Stephen's Church for the matrimonial coronation. A priest holding a censer went before them. The bride and the groom followed with their lighted candles. Slowly they passed through the Gate. The whole church, in chorus, resounded with the psalm: "Glory to God in the highest!"

With trembling hands, the old prelate exchanged the wedding wreaths. He felt that his life's work was fulfilled. Let the faith and the integrity of these children be strengthened. On the frail shoulders which bent before him rested the well-being of many peoples. Let God give them light, let Him grant them understanding.

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Their majesties, in the great hall with the nineteen prandial couches, sat to drink at the bridal table. With them were Pulcheria and the princesses. Afterward they stood to receive their guests. Each official came forward wearing his mantle. Five heralds raised their fine voices in a cheer; they assisted the nobles, taking their mantles. Paulinos, as sponsor and devoted friend, took a leading part.

For days the whole nation celebrated the happiness of the Emperor. His generosity was lavish—banquets throughout the country, games and performances in the hippodrome. The royal city was illuminated, joyful. Singing was heard at the crossroads and in the side streets.

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The news was heard in Athens: "The daughter of Leontios is marrying Augustus. Athenais is Empress." The city of Pallas-Athena was exultant. It hoped for better days.

But her brothers were frightened and tried to hide. They were afraid of their sister's revenge. They had not sensed her magnanimity. She asked them to come to her. "It was you who made me a present of the Empire," she said to them. "It was my good fortune which made you not listen to me, and not the opinion which you had of me." And she appointed them to higher ranks: Valerian to the post of magistrate and Gision to be prefect of Illyria.*

And the portrait of the new Empress was made ready to be sent to Ravenna, to Theodosios' uncle Honorius and his sister Placidia.

CHAPTER V

The wedding festivities slowly subsided. Life took on its old rhythm.

Within the palace Pulcheria's atmosphere again prevailed. Psalms were heard night and day. Fasting and prayer prevailed. Everywhere could be seen the black habits of monks. There were no ceremonies, no gold and purple uniforms and processions. The Emperor's sisters embroidered and sewed for the poor.

But protocol was imposed with exaggerated formality. It took the form of rigid and complicated religious observance. Diocletian and Theodosios the Great had brought to the Roman palaces the courtly forms of the Persian royalty. Every morning slaves strewed the halls with golden sand. When the Empress appeared surrounded always by ladies of the court, swarms of servants paid homage to her. Her every step was determined by etiquette. But Athenais was accustomed to this, and did not pay much attention. Perhaps all this was required if men were to believe that their rulers were the representatives of God on earth.*

Augusta Pulcheria was a woman of action. Ready very early in the morning, she took part in the morning liturgy. She cooperated with the master of the royal offices in the urgent affairs of the palace. Her carriage was always waiting. She visited orphanages, hospitals,

buildings under construction. Every day there were the evening vespers, also her collaboration with the Emperor. She might present him with orders to be signed. If any free time remained, she might sit with her sisters to sew for the needy. Her never-sleeping eye followed all that went on. She ruled.

Who can say where Christian self-denial and responsibility ended, and unbridled egoism began?

Athenais-Eudocia tried to adjust herself to the brilliance of her new life. She tried to understand so that she might love. First of all, so that she might love Theodosios. Augustus was not the strong husband who would impose himself on a wife and subdue her. He had serious defects: he was irresponsible, unheroic, indifferent. By this time the good king Jezdegerd had died in Persia; his heir, Varavanes, an anti-Christian, asked Byzantium to surrender the Christian refugees to him. The Orthodox Theodosios naturally refused, and war was declared. For a moment Athenais was full of hope. She was sure that the Emperor himself would go to the front. But no, he sent the general Ardavurios in his place. Athenais watched Theodosios, as, free from care, he sang the morning liturgy while others were in danger, and she was disillusioned.*

But she had to overlook what did not please her. She was queen; and he was the king, her husband, with many merits—good, God-fearing, always calm.* His manners were gentle, his nobility unforced. It made an impression on her when once he refused to favor a monk, who then cursed him. Theodosios would not take any food until the monk took back his curse. When one of his friends asked him why he did not condemn to death those who insulted him, he answered,

"I would rather have the power to raise the dead."*

Besides, she could talk to him about everything. What did he not know? What did he not remember? The Greek poets, the philosophers, the Latin authors, the Church Fathers—all were familiar to him. And like Leontios, he too studied the stars. Athenais would have wished Theodosios to have less erudition and more cultivation, so that he could draw near to the law of beauty. She would have wished him to have some force of personality, so that she could listen to him, have confidence in him.

But these were her hidden, unconfessed longings.

She marveled at his calligraphy. In the evening she spent many hours under the artistically-wrought lamp in which the oil never ran out,* watching him trace the beautiful gold and silver letters on the purple parchment. How perfect were his copies of the Gospels in the form of the cross!

One such evening when she was tired, she bent her head near to him and confided her great secret. She was to become a mother. He heard her, and he was as dazzled as if she had given him the world. Their union had been fulfilled.

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News from the front was good. The imperial army was proceeding victoriously on enemy soil. The Persians had been defeated. A peace treaty was signed with Byzantium, with the Christians. The Emperor was triumphant, and all the country with him. New coins were put into circulation, representing the king with trophies and the inscription *Gloria Romanorum*. Ora-

tors eulogized him in the public squares. Poets and nobles composed hymns for him.*

But Theodosios was delighted by a surprise which he did not expect. Among the poets appeared, beautiful and modest, the Empress, who also delivered to her husband heroic poems of her own composition: an encomium for the Emperor and his army. Enchanted, he received his beloved wife's verses. Nothing could have given him greater joy.

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At last the long anticipated day. Eudoxia was born to the royal pair. The palace rejoiced greatly. In this country, where Pulcheria had the title of Augusta, there was no preferred sex. Female children were as highly valued as males. What was important was that the dynasty of Theodosios the Great should continue.

The people and the heralds chanted:

"Mother of God, watch over the royally born." "Lord, give life to them for our sake."*

Proudly, Theodosios heard the joyful cries of the people. He bent toward Athenais and smiled lovingly at her; this woman was his whole life.

In January 423 he bestowed on her the title of Augusta. He wanted Athenais-Eudocia to be Pulcheria's equal throughout the Empire. Wearing the imperial diadem, the beautiful head of the Empress was pictured on the Byzantine coins.

"AELIA EUDOCIA AUGUSTA" was the inscription.

CHAPTER VI

A new queen in the sacred palace provided the focus for a new court. Now around Queen Eudocia were gathered her personal friends. Some were devoted admirers; others were opportunists who were counting on her increasing influence. Others, embittered, out of favor with Pulcheria, wanted to lean on the new Augusta. These latter created a climate of servility; they slandered, flattered, sold information. They changed the meaning of every word, every act, in order to transmit it as each one wished. Without their desiring it the two Augustas, the two courts, were in opposition to each other. An even balance was difficult.

Pulcheria was by nature severe and uncompromising. But on matters promoting the universality of Christianity, she was implacable. It may be that, along with her faith, a deep political instinct reinforced her in this direction. Perhaps she felt that this polymorphic Byzantium had only one unifying force, namely, Orthodoxy, and that it was the only civilizing influence on the barbarians who surrounded them.

Athenais, on the other hand, with her pure Hellenic spirit, saw what the Empire was longing for. And she felt her obligation to help. She had the great gift of being possessed by the idea of work, and she knew the importance of its prompt execution.

But how difficult her position was! How she had to hide her every feeling, watch her every word! How suspect was her pagan origin, in the midst of the impassioned bigotry of the court! She had to become accustomed to the idea that her every act, even the most straightforward, the most necessary, would provoke a reaction. Even her daily presence displeased many. She came to acknowledge the worth of political skill as a synthesis of human material for a great purpose. Athenais avoided display. She showed herself always in agreement with the Emperor; she did not express her personal opinion on religious matters. It was the only way she could help.

In 423 the decree of Pulcheria, like that of all previous rulers,* fixed capital punishment as the penalty for anyone caught in the act of idolatry. Athenais, with great discretion and with Christian arguments as well as political ones, asked her husband to change the capital punishment to exile. She begged him to show tolerance to peaceful unbelievers. And for the first time since Theodosios the Great, the Roman Augustus did not condemn to death pagans who worshiped their gods publicly. After much maneuvering, in 424 she persuaded Theodosios to reduce the taxes on the Greek cities.

Again in 426 Pulcheria ordered by decree that all pagan sanctuaries be destroyed. And Theodosios, thinking of the Athenian queen, of his own accord added, "or be purified by the sign of the Cross."

Athenais learned to take part in politics, but she did not want to lose her soul. By nature she was drawn to the best people, and they leaned on her. Only in her did they find the same desire to work for aims which would survive time.

All the training and the ideas of Paulinos found a response when he conversed with her. This old friend of Theodosios felt that for the first time in his life he had a purpose. Before, he had struggled against the dryly ambitious people of the palace, with their selfishly motivated fanaticism and their evil tongues. This woman ascended the throne and a spirit of work and substance swept away all that was trivial. As Master of the Offices, Paulinos saw her daily and a deep and fruitful friendship developed between them. Their mutual understanding was simple and quick. The gallant Paulinos, having been a member of the palace for a long time, was always there to explain the unexplainable, to support her.

The famous poet Kyros of Panopolis, a man of action with a broad Greek education, was her devoted friend. All the cultured Greeks were close to her. And by some miracle a dull emperor gathered around him the best spirits of his epoch.

Athenais, having been brought up with the support of mind and law, wanted to offer an intellectual remedy for the ignorance of her time. She wanted to organize education and justice. The administration of the Empire could stay in Pulcheria's hands. Thus Theodosios, under the influence of the queen and with the help of her friends, accomplished the two historic works of his reign.

In 425 he renovated, indeed he actually built, the University of the royal city. The queen knew well how important the Highest School was, how far its mission extended. In Athens she had lived close to her father through every moment of the Academy, and she knew what were the basic needs of a university: the best scholars, who would have sufficient and sure reward; academic freedom; and a position in the highest rank of society.

From the palace emanated a warm and loving concern for the School of the royal city. And this university blossomed. The best philosophers and rhetoricians gathered there. They were paid from the palace treasury. They were the highest ranking civil servants.

Augusta Eudocia's influence was evident everywhere. For the first time in the Eastern Empire, the Greek language was officially recognized. Fifteen rhetoricians and grammarians were teaching Greek, and only thirteen Latin. At last Byzantium began to achieve its linguistic unity.* Until then the people spoke Greek, while the officials were flattered into speaking Latin and being Romans. Of course, they esteemed Greek education, but they looked down on the Greeks. They called them pagans.*

But Athenais-Eudocia knew that the ancient marbles, the ancient texts, and the crucified Christ were seeking a synthesis in the embrace of a free understanding, that Byzantium was this embrace, and that she herself was Byzantium. She saw how small Greece, which seemed to be dying, transformed, spread, gave form to Christianity. She felt again that Fate sought her out for this throne in order to answer with authority the tragic petition of spiritually homeless masses.

Eudocia's court was a Greek court. But it was also deeply Christian. And this was its power. The miracle which came about in the soul of the pagan Athenais was her invincible approach to Christ. Athenais was ready to receive Him, not as a fanatical Byzantine, but as a mystic. Day by day her training continued. Slowly she made her way into the company of great Christians.

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The flowering of the University of the city did not damage the Neo-Platonic Academy of Athens. Its income remained intact, its teachers renowned. Athenais learned with inexpressible joy from the prefects and the bishops about the intellectual activity of the Athenian philosophers.

She herself had known Plutarch, the reformer of the Academy. And now, ten years after her marriage, she was learning about the wisdom of his successors. Syrianos from Alexandria, Proclos from the city of Constantine, were teaching there. Young students were coming to Athens to hear them. The Neo-Platonic Academy was again influential.

To be sure, the philosophers of Athens were pagans. But they were men of the highest morality, sober, genuine. Occupied with things of the spirit, they felt the philosophical need to live at some distance from their terrible era. Death lay in wait for their civilization. They knew it. They saw it coming. But it was difficult for them to adapt themselves to new historical currents, to accept the new roads which were changing the world.

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In 429 Theodosios began his second great work. He called together a committee of carefully chosen legal scholars, and he entrusted to them the collecting of all the imperial decrees of the Christian emperors. It was to begin with Constantine the Great and continue to Theodosios himself.* Supported from 435, this committee worked under the presidency of Antiochos. In 438 would be published the *Codex Theodosianus*, which was accepted immediately in the Western empire

by Emperor Valentinian and even by the barbarians.

The famous law of the Visigoths was an abridgment of this Code and some other sources. That abridgment of Alaric II would influence the laws of Western Europe until Charlemagne. The *Codex Theodosianus* was for many years both the authority and the rule.

To be sure the text was in Latin since all the laws until then were written in Latin, but these regulations, freshened by the Christian spirit, constituted for that epoch an advanced justice which resolved in the best way the contradictions and ambiguities of the old Roman law. Thus the Empire would acquire education and legislation. Great efforts to spread civilization would follow.

CHAPTER VII

Theodosios was nine years old when in 410 he learned that Rome had fallen, and that the Goths were detaining his father's brother, the Emperor Honorius, in Ravenna. Then Alaric took prisoner Galla Placidia,* Honorius' sister. He brought her to Galatia.

There the king of the Visigoths, Ataulf, Alaric's successor, took notice of her. The barbarian was dazzled by her grand manner, her youth, the air of distance which her royal upbringing had created in her, and he fell passionately in love with her. He married her in 414 at Narvona. The accompanying festivities were brilliant. Ataulf established Placidia in a royal bridal pavilion according to the Roman manner, and came to her in Roman uniform. The gifts were fabulous. He presented her with fifty handsome young men in Asiatic costume, all carrying trays filled with gold and precious stones.* Ataulf wanted to show how much he honored his wife and the dynasty. He wanted to draw close to the Latin world.

But after a year in Barcelona, he was murdered by his groom. As he lay dying, he begged his successor to send Placidia to her brother. Out of hatred, that man ill-treated her. Finally, in 416 the new king, Wallia, sent her to Ravenna to Honorius.

At this time Honorius needed the powerful general,

Constantine.* He decided to give his sister in marriage to Constantine and to proclaim him joint emperor. The couple had two children, Valentinian III and Honoria. But Placidia was not lucky with husbands. The second died suddenly in 421. Honorius gave her the title of Augusta and allowed her to govern beside him as Empress. But there were so many machinations and conspiracies at the court of Ravenna that Augusta Placidia preferred to absent herself for a while. She took her two small children and found refuge in Byzantium.

In the royal city the Emperor and the Empress received her warmly. Pulcheria felt close to Placidia. They had much in common: pride in their origin, strong personalities, passion for power. These two women at this time represented the entire power of Rome, and they knew it. They supported universal Orthodox Christianity. Furthermore, they knew how weak the two Emperors were—Honorius in the West and Theodosios in the East—and how much these rulers needed their help.

After her many adventures Placidia tried to enjoy for a while the safety and warmth of the Byzantine court. But scarcely any time passed before messengers arrived on the run from Ravenna to announce the death of Honorius. His heir was the little Valentinian, son of Placidia and Constantine. This meant that Theodosios, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire and guardian of his nephew, a minor, was temporarily master of Rome.

It was great luck in that difficult time for this child of five years to be with his mother in the royal city. Valentinian was immediately proclaimed Emperor of the West and Augusta Placidia was made regent for her

son. In order to put a further seal upon the solidarity of the two empires, they betrothed little Eudoxia, daughter of Theodosios and Athenais, to Valentinian.

Meanwhile in Ravenna the imperial notary John illegally took Honorius' throne. Theodosios himself, with his army and navy, prepared to conduct Placidia to Italy, to punish John, and to establish his little son-in-law on the throne of Rome. In the end, however, this sacred mission was entrusted to the patrician Ilion. The brave general Aspar advanced with the finest of the Byzantine army and conquered impregnable Ravenna. John was taken prisoner and killed. Rome opened its gates to the imperial legions.

Ilion, plenipotentiary of Theodosios, there in the presence of the Roman Senate on October 23, 425, dressed the little Valentinian in the purple vestments and put on him the crown of the Roman emperors.

Rome, weak as it now was, still exercised a boundless charm. It was the capital of the world. For centuries many diverse peoples had revered her. Athenais was grateful to God for the betrothal of little Eudoxia to the Emperor Valentinian. And as her beloved daughter grew and became more and more beautiful, a vision of her as the future Empress of the Western Empire was diffused throughout the Byzantine palace.

CHAPTER VIII

Work, wars, diplomatic maneuvering—days passed quickly for the king and the queen. But 431 was an unlucky year for the palace, for the whole kingdom. The royal couple lost its second child, a little girl, Flacilla. Athenais was heartbroken. Sharp pain, sickness of body and soul oppressed her. Thoughts, ideas, people—empty rinds on her storm-tossed ocean. The only warmth was the little face of Eudoxia. Athenais spent hours with her, played with her, watched her as if hypnotized, searching for some image of Flacilla.

But a further evil broke out, a great famine in the royal city. The old were dying; children were dying. Their mothers were reduced to skeletons without strength enough to mourn. The people stoned the Emperor when he went officially to inspect the granaries.

In terror Athenais saw countless little Flacillas dying. Every day she left the palace and hurried to the hungry with whatever food she could get hold of. She hurried to arrive before the worst should happen. Her sympathy kept her sleepless day and night. The children waited for her in agony. And then at last one morning from her window she saw with relief the first galley loaded with wheat sailing toward the harbor. She thanked God. Then she concerned herself with its just distribution.

And still another catastrophe. The great general Aspar, who was fighting the Vandals in Africa with such high hopes, returned in defeat.

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But all these sufferings—the hunger, the defeat, the deaths—were submerged in the wild seas of religious dissension. Nestorios himself, Patriarch of the royal city, had called the Virgin the Mother of Christ, and not the Mother of God. For the Byzantines of that period it was the one and only subject: the human nature of Christ. Is the Virgin the Mother of Christ as God? Or is she perhaps the Mother of Christ as Man? Thus simply did great masses of the people discuss it without understanding, and they became fanatics. Those who called her the Mother of God hated those who called her the Mother of Christ. All those who called her the Mother of Christ became known as Nestorians.

But the problem was a deep one, as is everything which is related to the foundation of religion. The two great religious schools of Antioch and Alexandria were not always in agreement about the formulation of the incarnation of the Logos. The Church Fathers as scholars tried to explain the dual nature of Christ. Influenced by Plato,* they wanted to lay a metaphysical foundation for the creed.

Near Antioch was the picturesque monastery of Euprepios. There lived a monk, later a priest, the famous Nestorios, who was well-known in his country for his writing and his eloquence. When the patriarchal throne in the capital became vacant in 428, he was

named Patriarch.

Nestorios' theories were not personal. He had been instructed in the school of Antioch which distinguished the divine nature of Christ from the human.* According to Nestorios, the divine Logos was not born and crucified, but rather Christ in His human nature.

It appears that arguments and discussions on this subject between the scholars of Antioch and others took place in the royal city even before Nestorios became Patriarch. At least this is what Nestorios himself wrote to Patriarch John of Antioch. Clerics had earlier called the Virgin Mother of Man. But before Nestorios, the official church had not intervened. Nestorios, in official pronouncements, in attempts to reconcile the factions, recommended Mother of Christ as the name of the Virgin. The reaction was sharp. Eusebios, then still a layman, later Bishop of Dorylos, interrupted Nestorios' sermons and began doctrinal discussions with him. Finally, in old Saint Sophia he posted an indictment against him. He denounced Nestorios' theory also to both Cyril of Alexandria and Pope Celestine.

It was Cyril, nephew and successor to Theophilos, who had earlier clashed with Chrysostom and who now maintained that the Virgin was the Mother of God and that such was, therefore, the name that fit her. Thus the Patriarch of the royal city again found himself face to face with the Patriarch of Alexandria.

Nestorios wrote to Pope Celestine to enlighten him on the matter. Cyril did the same. In 430 the Pope convened in Rome a local council, condemned the view of Nestorios, and named Cyril its representative. But all the clergy of Syria and Patriarch John

of Antioch followed the Patriarch of Constantinople. Then Cyril wrote Nestorios a long letter about dogma which he was obliged to accept. Perhaps they would have come to some sort of agreement, certainly with concessions on Nestorios' part, if the passions of the royal city had not then been at their worst. All the Byzantines on the street and in the court were discussing the issue violently, taking sides with one group or the other.

In the palace indeed the disagreement was even more lively. Theodosios esteemed the Patriarch of the city for his impeccable morality and for his nobility. On the other hand, Pulcheria felt such an abhorrence for him that her contemporaries could not restrict her to theological disagreement. The courtiers said that Augusta Pulcheria hated the Patriarch because he had testified to the Emperor concerning an amorous weakness on her part for Paulinos.* The passions of that time respected nothing. And Paulinos exerted a great fascination on the imagination of the palace crowd. But Pulcheria's pursuit of Nestorios even into his exile gave credence to all the suspicions.

Cyril continued his ruinous fight against the Patriarch of the royal city. He fomented passions. He bribed palace favorites.* He reached the point of writing separately to Pulcheria, separately to Theodosios and Athenais. Theodosios answered him bitterly; how could one imagine that the Patriarch of Alexandria would seek to divide the royal family?

As always, Pulcheria won. In November of 430 she called together at Ephesos the Third Ecumenical Council to take place on Pentecost in 431. President of the Council was Cyril, as representative of the Pope. He

reached Ephesos with an entourage of Egyptian bishops, monks and strong-armed sailors. Theodosios, whose sympathy was with the Patriarch of Constantinople, designated Candidian, a personal friend of Nestorios, to be the imperial representative. Nestorios himself refused to be present. The Council consisted of 160 bishops, but it gathered 200 signatures. Without waiting for the arrival of the bishops from Syria, it condemned and anathematized Nestorios and his teachings. The people of Ephesos cheered the bishops and accompanied them to their dwellings with lighted candles.

But John, Patriarch of Antioch, who had been delayed, arrived with thirty bishops from Syria. They gathered fifty-four bishops together with the cooperation of the imperial representative. These constituted themselves a special council and deposed Cyril of Alexandria. Thus the Council of Ephesos split into two sections which arrived at contradictory decisions. It was difficult for Cyril to communicate with his followers. Devilishly clever, he dressed a friend in beggar's clothing, and he put inside a hollow cane a letter to the monks of the city, asking their help.

The monks gathered with a great clamor in front of the palace, and their leader spoke with Theodosios. The Emperor tried to reconcile the two factions. He decreed that both Cyril and Nestorios were legally deposed, and ordered them confined to prison in Ephesos.

But the Council continued to meet. Then the Emperor by an episcopal decree ordered its adjournment and the return of the bishops to their sees. Influenced by Pulcheria, he renounced his friend Nestorios and exiled him to a monastery near Antioch. But even

there Pulcheria pursued him. After a year she sent him still further away to the Great Oasis in Egypt* where he died in 440. Cyril she re-established on his throne in Alexandria.

Because the Council had not arrived at theological conclusions, Theodosios sent a high official into Syria and Egypt to reconcile the differences of the two sides. As a basis they took the "Confession" which Theodoretos of Cyrrhus had written in Ephesos. The leaders of the two sides, Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch, and their followers accepted this conciliatory confession. This became the official decision on dogma of the Third Ecumenical Council and established the name "Mother of God."

The remaining Nestorians abandoned Syria and took refuge in the inner part of Asia, Mesopotamia and Persia. Even today there are groups of Nestorians in India, in Chaldean Christian communities.

Pulcheria triumphed, and to honor the God-Bearer, she built the famous church of the Virgin at Vlachernae. Pope Sextus, who succeeded Celestine, built as a monument to the same victory of Orthodoxy the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Even Theodosios, who had now come over to the side of Cyril, built a great church in Alexandria.

It is sweet to be on the winning side.

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At the time, Athenais did not take a personal position on the controversy. She did not agree with Nestorios' theory, but she did not wish to oppose her opinion to that of the Emperor.

Constantly she thought of the little lost Flacilla. And she trembled for Eudoxia. Now, with burning faith, she made a great vow: to see the marriage of her daughter to Valentinian, then to go to Jerusalem to thank God, to offer up her gratitude to Him in the land of His sacrifice.

CHAPTER IX

Little Eudoxia, born to the purple, grew up. She was very beautiful, even more beautiful than her mother. When she passed through the streets of the royal city, people gathered to admire her. Delighted by so much love around her, she was always laughing and gay. Her fame passed beyond the boundaries of the Empire; it passed even beyond her own century. Procopios one hundred years later would still speak of her beauty.

Contact between East and West was uninterrupted. The friendship of Pulcheria and Placidia was close, their love great. When Honoria, the daughter of Placidia, fell in love with the courtier Eugenios, her mother, in order to hide her shame, sent the young girl to Byzantium. And the severe, chaste Pulcheria confined the sinner in a convent. Placidia introduced to their Byzantine majesties her wealthy Roman friend, Osia Melania. Melania had persuaded her husband that they should devote their lives to Christ. They distributed all their goods to the poor and traveled to the East and to the holy lands, building churches and monasteries. When the time came to prepare Valentinian's marriage, he sent as his representative to the royal city Melania's uncle, Volousian, to arrange the festivities with the Byzantines.

The plan was for the marriage to take place in Thessalonica. The procession of Romans would stop there,

and their Byzantine majesties would deliver their daughter to the bridegroom. Thessalonica was decked with arches and banners. People stayed up all night, waiting in the streets for the great moment when the rulers of East and West would meet in their city.

The moment came. Trumpets were heard—and behold! The Roman patricians appeared in the splendid uniforms of the imperial guard. In the center, like St. George on a white charger, dressed in purple, was the Emperor Valentinian. Rejoicing flooded the Macedonian capital. Shouts of joy were heard; the crowds were beside themselves with cheering.

But the twenty-year-old groom could no longer restrain his amorous passion. He was indifferent to the programs, to the people. For years he had waited for this hour. For years he had heard travelers describe the beauty of his beloved. He longed to see her. He sent a messenger in haste to Constantinople to say that he would come there himself. And without stopping, without resting, galloping along the Via Ignatia, he arrived at the royal capital like a whirlwind.*

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Excited crowds received the bridegroom of their cherished and only princess. The Emperor brought with him the dowry of the Western kingdom. He gave Illyria as a gift to Byzantium.

Athenais, her heart tightened with emotion, watched her child's happiness. She personally supervised the preparations so that every detail would give the greatest possible joy to her little girl, so that everything would enhance her beauty.

Such days were not to come again. The royally-born, the very beautiful great-granddaughter of Theodosios the Great, was married to the Emperor Valentinian. On October 29, 437 the Patriarch Proclos blessed the young couple. Festivities and merriment lasted for months. Dangers were forgotten in the joy of such a union. East and West were merging.

Melania came from Jerusalem to see her beloved uncle, Volousian. She found him very ill. In despair lest he die a pagan and lose his soul, she begged the Patriarch to help her lead him to belief in Christ. Volousian died a Christian. And this was a second blessing on the newly married pair.

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The nuptials were completed, and the festivities in the hippodrome, the feasts in the squares, came to an end. They made ready the boats in the Bosporos. They carried aboard boxes made of fragrant, precious wood which contained the princess' dowry and whatever else the young woman loved. Trusted women accompanied her. The young couple planned to pass the winter in Thessalonica, and settle in Ravenna in the spring. The people of the city gathered at the harbor to see their beloved princess for the last time.

Little Eudoxia, now Empress of the West, took leave of them fondly. She said farewell to her father the Emperor, to Pulcheria, to Paulinos. In tears she embraced her mother. She looked at her again. How difficult to be separated from her!

With her husband she went down to the royal galley. The oars all rose together in one rhythmic motion.

The ship started slowly. Athenais, mute, fixed her eyes on the boat which was being lost in the distance, until that last point when it finally disappeared. Nothing more. She stood there dispirited. She knew very well that this moment was cutting her life in two.

In silence they returned to the palace. Theodosios was proud; his daughter was an empress, his people were happy. Athenais beside him uttered a few words with difficulty. Dark thoughts overwhelmed her. Would she ever see her again? The world was in disorder. The barbarians were attacking everywhere. Separation was never more grievous.

Time passed. Theodosios copied old texts in his beautiful writing. But Athenais endured her great privation in secret. The two-edged day of farewell had taken the substance out of her life. Her wings were now folded. She wanted not to remember. Let her welcome with the Emperor the sacred relics of Chrysostom, let her see Theodosios deliver his Codex, then let her go away and fulfill her vow. Let her go to the tomb of Jesus. The pious Melania, before leaving, had explained to her the deep comfort to be found in the holy lands. She had promised to wait for her there.

She confided her plans to the Emperor. He too was grateful to God and wanted this pilgrimage to take place. He considered it his obligation and his glory. Since the time of St. Helen no woman of the royal family had gone to Jerusalem. And now Theodosios was to send as a pilgrim his beloved, the Empress, the mother of Emperor and Empress, Aelia Eudocia-Athenais. He helped with zeal and dedication. Royal escorts, fast ships, the treasuries of the state—all these were at her disposal. Her departure was set for the

spring of 438.

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On the 23rd of January in that year, the royal capital received in a devout service of mourning the relics of the man who thirty years before had sacrificed himself for the Church. They brought the bones of John Chrysostom from Komana in the Pontos. With their majesties at the head of the procession they rendered due honor to the great hierarch. His relics were placed in the Church of the Holy Apostles, beside the graves of emperors and patriarchs of Byzantium.

In 438 Theodosios published the Codex.

The queen felt a deep satisfaction.

CHAPTER X

Now at last Athenais-Eudocia could leave. So in the spring she started for Judaea with selected officers and noble ladies from her retinue. She shone in beauty and splendor. In an official procession the Emperor escorted her to the royal ship. He was moved as he said farewell to her. The galleys started off slowly. The palace, the royal city, were lost in the soft haze. An intoxicating sense of freedom possessed her. She breathed deeply of the sea air. The choking prison of power was far away.

She left behind her the Bosporos, the Propontis, and from the strait of the Hellespont she faced the Aegean. On the deck the Athenian queen followed the coastline with careful concentration. She looked at Troy. She could almost see the ships of the Achaeans! There in his despair Achilles had called on his mother, Thetis. There were all the heroes, their weapons, their battlefield. Verses from the *Iliad* went through her head. "Poetry is the very substance of life," she thought to herself. Homer had touched this shore and made it immortal.

And the ship sailed on. Lesbos. Sappho, weeping over her love.* "It shook the mind as the mountain wind falls on the oaks."

The flowers of the lemon trees, their fragrance, filled the air. Chios, perhaps Homer's native land, as

the Homeric hymn to the Delian Apollo said.*

And now Rhodes. With what sacrifices the Sun, the light-creating father waited for the island to spring from the waves, to become his. How beautiful that ode of Pindar!*

And the ship sailed on.

The rock where Aphrodite was born, Cyprus.

Erect on the prow, the lovely woman felt familiar breezes caressing her hair. They were memories, paeans, legends of these beaches where poets lived with gods. She was lost in a dream of sun and sea. She felt how much it needed poetry and history to become completely our own.

"Augusta, Seleucia has appeared."* She turned and smiled absent-mindedly at her attendant; a part of the journey had come to an end. Here the royal party was to disembark.

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Athenais proceeded across the fertile, sun-bathed plain. The revelry of spring intoxicated her. Hosts of poppies and lilies of the field were strewn joyously at her feet. Everything was in flower. Honeysuckle and roses climbed over bitter orange and the Judas trees. Brooks ran down from Mount Silpius. Prickly pear and laurel lined the road. The fragrant air of the mountain had the taste of the sea. She went forward slowly with open heart so as to take in all the beauty of the land.

Suddenly Antioch emerged from the verdure opposite. Voluptuous, mocking, Christian Antioch. She knew about it before she saw it. Her kind of woman, trained

in study, does not lose her thirst for learning. Since first she occupied the throne of Byzantium she had studied her Empire as had no one else. The civilization and the history of every country which composed her vast realm were known to her. How could she not know its third city?

Alexander the Great himself had chosen the most beautiful site, there on the foot-hills of Mount Silpius,* and dedicated the spring to Olympias. The river Orontes wound around it. And Seleucos was glad to build his capital there. Athenais knew that from the first its inhabitants were true Greeks.* And now that the city had spread out and grown, the Greeks were once again dominant.

These people of Asia were dazzled as they gazed at their queen. They cheered her enthusiastically. In the midst of the injustice of their time they were grateful for the hope which her coming gave them. Now she would know their misfortune, would decrease their taxes, would protect their freedom.

Far away from the capital she could abandon rigid protocol. From time to time she stopped her progress to speak with the people, to call the children to her.

The Empress went on eagerly. She was curious to see at close range this incomparable city with its own manners, its luxurious life, beloved by the Roman emperors. She had read many episodes from its history, as well as *The Beard-Hater* of Julian. A great emperor would hardly write a whole work to answer the taunts of the Antiochenes. They must have received him badly, because Julian wanted to imitate the Stoics and therefore wore a beard and the threadbare clothing of a philosopher. Their easy, luxurious life had made

them impudent, without inhibitions. The imperial title did not frighten them. But they knew as well as any how to value intellect and good speech.

Athenais went forward with some apprehension. She considered it her duty to Theodosios to win over the people whom she would meet. There at the gates of the city was the harsh Patriarch, John, accompanied by his clergy, the prefect of the praetorium of Anatolia, and the leaders of the eighteen demes. The queen stepped down from her litter and greeted them courteously. The people who had gathered round broke into enthusiastic cheering. She was beautiful and simple.

She knew Patriarch John well and admired his personality. The Empress devoted her full attention to him. In that tempestuous Council of Ephesos in 431 Pulcheria and Theodosios had covered up all the illegalities of the fanatical Alexandrian patriarch, Cyril. In the savage religious struggle between Alexandria and Antioch, Pulcheria had been passionately on the side of the Alexandrians.

Certainly Nestorios was essentially wrong. His heresy had to be condemned. And the people of the city, so devoted to the Virgin, with all the largeness of their folk spirit—how could they accept any other name for her? Mother of God and only Mother of God. Their worship of the Mother of God was deeply rooted in them. How many were her hymns, how many her miracles? But passion, above all passion for victory, is a quality unbecoming to a ruler and to a Christian. Pulcheria, now, after so many years, was still hating and persecuting Nestorios. She transferred him from desert to desert in Libya. And Queen Eudocia,

there in his country among his friends, if not his followers, was obliged in some way to excuse the dynasty.

For the sake of the Church Patriarch John had become reconciled with the royal city and also with Alexandria. But Athenais, as pilgrim to the holy places, wanted his heartfelt blessing. She asked him with genuine interest and sympathy about the psychic and spiritual attitudes of the Christians. She asked him about the quality of his clergy. He eagerly and eloquently explained to her that the Antiochenes considered their church to be glorious, "the Mother of Churches," and that they wanted always to honor it. They were proud that it was founded by Barnabas and Paul and Peter, that these were the first to call Christians the 'pupils' of the Master.*

The wise Patriarch explained to her how the Antiochenes, without prejudice and without guile, accepted the teachings of Christ. The great moral rebirth of the people had been and was the new religion. He told her about the martyrs, about the deacon Romanos. When Galerius condemned him to be burned alive he answered contemptuously, "Where is the fire?" He spoke to her about the holy teacher, Lucian, the latest martyr. Maximos condemned him to death. On the eve of his execution he prepared the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and his own breast was the holy table. Athenais listened to the Patriarch devoutly. And John was happy, feeling that a deeper understanding bound his church to the Byzantine court.

The Empress now asked the prefect and the nobles to show her Antioch. Everything interested her. Four magnificent streets with porticoes and statues separated the four main communities.* They had built public

baths near the Spring of Olympias. There were reservoirs everywhere. Water ran merrily among the luxuriant plantations. Huge plane trees shaded the banks of the Orontes. In the famous suburb of Daphne, Apollo's temple no longer stood. But the nymph, chased by the Pythian god and transformed into a laurel bush, flourished.

Athenais asked to inspect the walls. The latest ones had been built by Theodosios the Great; within them he had enclosed the most remote houses, even those on the mountain. But since then they had fallen into ruin. She promised to write to the Emperor, and Theodosios, wanting to show that he shared the queen's concern, would order that the walls be renovated immediately and that the gates of the city be faced with gold. He further ordered a large basilica to be built.

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The moment of departure arrived. In the Senate chamber were gathered the leaders of the city, the nobles, the people. The Empress was about to take her leave. Athenais, freed from the censorship of the palace, spoke to them from the golden throne. And her carefully chosen words fell like precious stones on the devout silence of the hall. She spoke to them in her pure Attic Greek about their city, its history, its mission. She admired its origin and the quality of its people. She reported on the Greek colonies which were spreading civilization throughout the Aegean, on all the shores of Syria.

But at the end, when her Greek spirit broke forth in the Homeric line:

"I boast that I am of your stock and blood,"

the educated and discriminating public of Antioch went wild with enthusiasm. These Greeks to be sure truly admired her as queen, but they also recognized her as the archetype of the Greek woman. They wanted to honor her, to memorialize her visit. The Public Council voted to set up her statue* in gold in the Senate chamber and to put a bronze stele in the museum.

The Empress had won over the difficult Antiochenes. And this spiritual conquest made a deep impression on the thoughtful people of the era. Centuries would pass and the chroniclers would continue to fill pages with this splendid event.

CHAPTER XI

Now Athenais-Eudocia abandoned human concerns. God had helped her fulfill all her obligations. This cycle was ended, and she left behind her its cares, its plans, its antagonisms. She could go forward beyond all this to the substance of the cosmos, to the Mount of Olives, to Golgotha.

She started from the suburb of Daphne, passed through Laodicaea and Tripolis, through the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, and, traveling always parallel to the shore line, she reached Ptolemais. From there she went toward Judaea. The ambitious Bishop Juvenal was waiting for her, as were the Byzantine governor of Palestine and her Roman friend, Melania. They went on toward Jerusalem. The city sat easily on the hills like an amphitheater. Mount Zion stood out. Around were olive trees, cypresses, palms.

Queen Eudocia went on in silence. With what readiness of spirit, with what detachment from material things would she touch the holy soil! She wanted to be hungry, to be in pain, to walk barefoot, to humble herself as Our Lord had humbled Himself.

As she drew near, her soul was flooded with inexpressible emotion. Was the air she breathed the same air to which Our Lord consigned His last breath? In supplication she whispered, "Dear Christ, I come to

Thy earth as to the boundaries of Heaven, since here I find Thy footprints. As if ready for death, I enter into Thy mystery. I am unworthy. Help me to come near Thee. Consider that when Thou gavest me the grace to do good, I forgot the good which I did, that I avoided judging my fellowmen. Consider the great love for mankind that fills my soul. Let me come near Thee."

She went on, always intent, silent. From the time she set out, she had waited for this moment.

But the Sublime lives only in our hearts. In the world it ravels out.

CHAPTER XII

Jerusalem! Chosen by God centuries ago! What city has suffered more?

How differently she had imagined it! Unwillingly she recalled St. Jerome* when he tried to discourage pilgrims: "Do not imagine that something is missing from your faith if you do not see Jerusalem. If the places where the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection happened were not found in a crowded city where there are guards, clowns, jesters, as there are in other cities, if it were inhabited by monks, then all would wish to live here."

Gregory of Nyssa said the same. With bitterness he wrote: "All the cities of the East and Jerusalem too are infected with evil, thefts, adulteries, idolatries, murders." And he wished to disillusion those who might come.

But who can uproot vows and pilgrimages from the souls of Christians? They are always interwoven with misfortune and faith. Jerusalem was the source of religious exaltation. But in this era of calamity it was something more. After the fall of Rome many Christians went there to find peace and consolation outside their disordered time. For Byzantium gave direct protection to the holy city. Jerusalem conveyed a feeling of security as did Constantinople.

The Athenian queen found a new world, a world opposed to what she had loved until now. Nothing reminded her of Greece. Nothing reminded her of the Roman capital of Constantine. What a sense of suffering this place imparted! Under every stone a martyrdom, nostalgia, lamentations of Jews and Christians. What sufferings since the time when Christ was crucified!

The famous Titus, who considered his day lost if he had not done some good deed, destroyed it, devastated it. Then came Hadrian in 117 to complete the disaster. He drowned the revolution of the Jews in blood; he demolished the walls of Jerusalem and left it unfortified. He dedicated it to Jupiter Capitolinus. He renamed Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina. In place of Solomon's temple he built a temple to Zeus, on Golgotha the shrine of Aphrodite. On every anniversary of its destruction by Titus, the Jews were given permission to come to the place of their razed temple and mourn. The ill-fated people wept, tore their garments in despair, and fled again to Tiberias by the sea. There they had their synagogue. With the only respite under the reign of Julian, this condition continued for centuries. Now, even in the days of St. Jerome and Athenais, only on this tragic anniversary could Hebrews enter their holy city.

So in the time of St. Constantine, Aelia Jerusalem was almost deserted. With difficulty one found a house to live in. A few Syrians, a few Phoenicians, a few Aramaeans and descendants of the colonists whom Hadrian brought were living there. And there were some secret idolaters. The worship of Astar and Mithra had deeply-rooted centers in Palestine. The rest were Christians.

But with the open protection of Constantine the Great, the city began to come to life again. The Emperor from Rome gave the order to demolish the temple of Aphrodite and to search for the Holy Sepulchre. And when it was found he wrote to the Bishop of Jerusalem to build a shrine there: "I have confidence in you and in your effectiveness, not only to make this building the most beautiful in the world, but also to insure that the details of its decoration will be the most brilliant up to this time. Our piety has ordered that you have at your disposal artists, workers, and whatever else your judgment considers necessary."

With these instructions they built a large circular church set on columns. They called it the Church of the Resurrection. Beyond it they built a broad basilica, the Martyrdom. A courtyard separated the Martyrdom from the Resurrection. Golgotha remained outside the buildings with a cross ornamented with valuable stones. They carved out the cliff, but fortunately they left one part intact.

On the 13th of September, 355 the official dedication of the Resurrection took place in the presence of the Emperor's representative and three hundred bishops. Jersualem had acquired its religious center.*

During this feverish activity of Christendom, St. Helen, the mother of the Emperor, arrived from Rome. A dazzling event in those years. The first time an important personage from Rome, a baptized Christian, had come to aid Christ's Church. Many things are attributed to this journey, some legends, some history. She began to build the two great basilicas on the Mount of Olives and at Bethlehem. She discovered the true Cross. They say that she found three crosses in a

cistern near the rock; one was so miraculous that all believed it to be the Cross of Christ.

The imagination of believers could not be controlled. At the beginning of the fifth century, they were still showing Christians the inscription which Pilate had dictated about Jesus.

St. Constantine and St. Helen died, but a great impetus had been given to Jerusalem. The Christian state of Byzantium guarded and protected the sacred city as if it were a precious stone. Piety moved the faithful to build churches and monasteries. First in Egypt, later in Palestine, there were many hermits and monks. Monks came to Judaea even from the Nile Valley. The mountains and deserts around Golgotha were full of cells, huts, and caves of ascetics. The monastery of St. Euthemios was famous for its holiness. Bishop Juvenal had consecrated it in 428. Melania the Elder had built on the Mount of Olives a monastery for nuns and a hostel for pilgrims. In the course of the years, twenty-five churches and monasteries would cover the entire mountain. The places of the Bible were no longer as they had been. It was hard to recognize them.

But in Jerusalem Athenais-Eudocia saw nothing, felt nothing but the passage of Christ. Regularly she followed the liturgy, matins, vespers. The bishops and priests knew both Greek and Syriac as well. They celebrated in Greek and a priest translated into Syriac. She sensed the work which was being carried out in this oldest of churches, founded by Jacob. There liturgies took form. There the services, the hymns, the prayers were established. There it was decided what texts would be read on the feast-days. There

too the rules of monastic life were determined.

Augusta Eudocia responded to the spirit of humility which prevailed. The last was first. Any difference in dress attracted attention. No one, whoever he might be, was either blamed or praised. No luxury, no competition. What a relief when men do not contend among themselves like wild beasts!

Athenais felt her infinite obligation to Christ. On Golgotha she fervently dedicated the great gold cross which she had brought from the capital. She began to build churches whose construction she would follow even after she had left: St. Sophia of the Praetorium, St. Peter's in the palace at Haifa. St. John the Baptist, of which the sanctuary is preserved even today as a crypt. And, as always, she considered it her duty to look after the fortification of the city. She would rebuild its ruined walls. She believed that it was of her that the Prophet David had written: "And on thy good will I build the walls of Jerusalem."*

For one year she had carried out her work in the holy city and made her prayers to God. All of Christendom was grateful to her. They called her the new Helen. In order to express thanks to her Bishop Juvenal gave as a gift to the capital the relics of St. Stephen and the chains pf St. Peter the Apostle. She herself would carry them back.

But her obligations were in Constantinople. Theodosios was waiting for her. And at last she took the road of return.

CHAPTER XIII

It is said that the return is the greatest joy of a journey. But for Athenais her entry into the city was a real triumph. The Emperor himself came aboard the royal ship to receive his wife. He looked at her again with great pride, and the people of the capital, impatient, gathered at the harbor and welcomed her with uncontrolled enthusiasm. As she walked down beside the Emperor, holding the sacred relics, she carried with her Christ's blessing. The people jostled each other as they tried to touch the edge of her cloak. They crossed themselves over and over as she passed by.*

Her fame and her prestige went beyond the boundaries of the Empire. She knew the people first-hand, their privations and their fears; she had shielded them, helped them. She had been sanctified by her sacred journey.

In an official procession of the entire clergy and the nobles, Athenais moved forward beside the Emperor. The people followed, full of piety and gratitude. At the Church of St. Lawrence* she gave over the relics of St. Stephen to the Emperor. He entered the sanctuary and placed them on the altar. The Patriarch read the service of thanksgiving.

The procession continued to the Church of the Holy Apostles. There again Athenais presented the

chains of St. Peter to Theodosios. And in the presence of the bishops he placed them on the altar.

But Augusta Eudocia wanted her daughter to share in the blessing of the pilgrimage. A piece of the chains of the Apostle was sent to Eudoxia. And the devout young Empress of the West was to build in Rome the Church of St. Peter Bound (*ad vincula*) to house these chains.*

Theodosios was happy to have her back. Her absence had given him a greater sense of her value. Now he knew how poor life was without her. Always a certain timidity troubled him. He was not at ease with women. As a young man, he had loved one woman, his wife. Queen Eudocia completed his existence. Except for her he was surrounded entirely by eunuchs.

His austere sister Pulcheria had come to know the eunuch Chrysaphios, who was very handsome. He exerted more and more influence over the Emperor. But now that the queen had come home, Theodosios turned again only to her. He needed her vital femininity, he enjoyed her clear mind, the warm atmosphere which she created around her. And he needed as well her superior friends, who came immediately to the palace to express their devotion to her. Athenais, who had no mother, had grown up among distinguished men and was always enchanted by the serious masculine mind. From the beginning of her reign her close personal court had consisted of the most distinguished personalities.

But how many worries beset the Emperor! The Empire was surrounded by barbarians, Vandals, Persians, Saracens. The Huns were advancing toward Illyria. Gaiseric, the leader of the Vandals, was inciting the barbarians of Asia against the Byzantines. Valentinian,

unable to fight him, had concluded a peace with him and surrendered Africa. From moment to moment the famous Carthage was in danger of being lost.

Augusta Eudocia, mature now, felt increasingly her obligation to the populations of the endless Empire. She saw the danger to her own capital. She again asked the Emperor to appoint Kyros of Panopolis to be prefect of the city. This time, as quickly as possible, the Emperor carried out her request. On March 23, 439, Kyros became prefect.* And when he came to thank his queen, she gave him one mandate, and only one: the walls. Before everything else, the walls: as strong as possible, as impregnable as possible, but without any postponement he must build the walls of the city. She promised her full cooperation.

Kyros of Panopolis or Panopolites was one of the great men of the period. A poet, a philosopher, he was also a brave fighter and an able politician.* Augusta Eudocia had taken note of him from the beginning of her reign. As a general in the African war against Gaiseric, he had shown valor and good sense. At that time she raised him to the rank of patrician. She received him regularly, confided in him. For a long time she had been trying to give him an important position. But she ran into insuperable difficulties. Now she was sure that with the rank of prefect he would strengthen the defense of Byzantium in the most effective way possible.

The queen wondered how it was that many cities failed to fortify themselves sufficiently, even though these terrible swarms of barbarians were pillaging the whole civilized world like demons. Every town should be an impregnable fortress. And there in Constantinople, neither Pulcheria, absorbed in heresies, nor the calli-

grapher Theodosios gave any thought to the terrible danger of a barbarian raid on the city, the very heart of the Empire. They left unprotected the capital itself.

Like the responsible empress that she was, Eudocia felt that in her epoch the defense of a city was good walls. Each postponement might be fatal. It was the mission of Byzantium to save civilization, to save Orthodoxy. In Antioch, in Jerusalem, in Constantinople, her interest was always concentrated on the walls. Kyros, in the short time Fate had granted him to serve the public good, accomplished a work of salvation which lasted for centuries: the walls. Augusta's aid was unconditional. She cooperated with ideas, with abundant funds. And, as Kyros had previously been accustomed to discuss with her the form of his verses or to tell her about the war in Africa, now he submitted his plans to her. Together they studied the practicality, the effectiveness of the resistance, the harmonious relation of one building to another.

Since the time of Constantine the Great, the royal city had spread out. Many citizens had their dwellings outside the fortifications. Kyros destroyed the old walls and built new ones around the capital. Toward the sea the walls had been ruined by a great earthquake; he renovated them, rebuilt them. Thus he encompassed the greater capital with a strong belt, a triple line of walls. Within the earthworks, pits, trenches, and dikes made the city an impregnable fortress. The first line, the one nearest the city, had a height of twelve meters, and the trenches were twenty meters wide. From ninety-six towers those under siege could observe whoever tried to come near, could aim easily at any enemy who might approach the ten gates.*

For ten centuries Huns, Persians, Arabs, Slavs would smash against this invincible barrier of Kyros and Eudocia. For ten centuries protected by this Theodosian wall, the royal city would guard the ancient texts, would foster Christianity, would amass great wealth, would flourish. Harsh and gentle at the same time, with its religion, "the living water," with its passion for theology, the arts, and metaphysics, it would create its own civilization. And the whole world would draw upon it.

From 439 to 441 there was feverish activity in Byzantium. The best men of the community were working for its welfare. And its people were working too. Kyros wanted to satisfy Augusta Eudocia, to accomplish her assignment quickly. He organized every working hand. Even the weak, the old, he used as guards. No poor man was idle in the capital, nor was there a beggar. Everyone could enjoy the satisfaction of work. A wave of prosperity spread through the city. Out of the generosity of her nature, Eudocia stood by them, rich in her resources. Quickly, for they must not waste time. Who knew how long her power would last? Kyros worked night and day. He himself supervised, standing on the scaffolding.

In the few years of his consulship, this poet and builder accomplished miracles. He built the walls. He lit up the dark capital. A Greek, he drew up all his decisions in Greek. Still he found time to express his opposition to Nestorios, to build the Church of Mary, the Mother of God. The people were enraptured; they worshiped him.

CHAPTER XIV

The magistrate Paulinos* assisted the Empress in her great enterprise.

While Athenais-Eudocia was in Jerusalem Paulinos avoided appearing much in the court. He sensed that the eunuch Chrysaphios, who was close to the king, was an implacable enemy. The new favorite hated Paulinos for his education, for his noble birth, for all those virtues which Chrysaphios himself did not have. And Paulinos' heart ached for his childhood friend, Theodosios, who was so weak as to keep constant company with so shameful a subject. He also avoided seeing Pulcheria. At the time of the persecution of Nestorios there had been much whispering about her and Paulinos. He wanted to protect her. But now that Athenais had returned, as her devoted friend he went to her immediately to assist her. The understanding between them was effortless, their cooperation always cordial and fruitful.

But the Empress knew that she was sitting on a volcano. Her enemies multiplied daily. Jealousy and envy rose like a mountain around the Hellenes who were governing.

Pulcheria apparently disliked her now. Why? Was that old rumor that she loved Paulinos true? Who could say? But his daily presence near the queen displeased

Pulcheria. Her favorites understood this, and day after day they dropped poison into her troubled mind. "The magistrate left the *onopodium* very late last night." "Where was he?" "With Augusta Eudocia again." Pulcheria listened and asked no questions.

Was it that Athenais' work was taking on enormous dimensions? Every day Kyros laid at the queen's feet all the day's achievement, all his increasing popularity. When he finished a gate or a trench, she was the first to be informed. The Augusta Eudocia, with the prefect Kyros, held the keys of government. The walls, unlike the university, were not for the few. The simplest man rejoiced in them and thought highly of them. The people's love for her day by day approached its highest point.

The Emperor saw her daily, and listened to her. Augusta Aelia Eudocia was all-powerful.

But Pulcheria had deep roots and strong allies. The whole clergy went with her. For years she alone had governed. She had great political capacity. Her good sense settled religious quarrels.

The two Augustas were in opposiiton.

Another inner concern kept Athenais awake at night. Between herself and Theodosios she felt the presence of a third person. A mysterious enemy with a strong influence on her husband was altering his character. Many of the things he did were incomprehensible. In good moments the two of them conversed with their usual abandon and mutual confidence. Then suddenly his eyes no longer saw her. He was absent-minded, following some thought of his own, some worry. The third person had appeared again. What they had been saying was without meaning. Theodosios still loved her; she was sure of that. But for how long?

CHAPTER XV

Pulcheria's friends now had a plan to put Augusta Eudocia aside, to undermine the Emperor's confidence in her. Chrysaphios also wanted to destroy Theodosios' love for his wife.

One day it all came out—irrational, silly, horrid, as often happens. They were celebrating Epiphany. The Augustus went alone to the church except for his attendants, because Paulinos had severe pains in his leg and had to remain immobile. A poor man in the street offered the Emperor a huge apple from Phrygia. The fruit made an impression on Theodosios and his following. The Emperor bought it and because he was in love, he sent it to the queen. She, on her part, knowing that Paulinos was ill, sent it to him. Paulinos admired it so much that he wanted Theodosios to enjoy it too. Not knowing its origin, he innocently sent it to the Emperor.

Who happened to be with the king when he received it? Who, when the king was visibly upset, smiled slyly? Who uttered the remark, "So, Paulinos got sick in order to stay near the Augusta"? Was it Chrysaphios? Pulcheria's man?

A thick black cloud obscured Theodosios' mind and judgment. A thick black cloud enveloped the shining woman whom he loved. The inexorable Furies broke

in, suspicion, jealousy. And they would not leave him.

He called Augusta Eudocia and, like an inquisitor, asked her, "What did you do with the apple I sent you?" With her usual poise she answered, "I sent it to our faithful friend Paulinos."* He looked at her with those suspicious eyes of his as if he were seeing her for the first time, certain that she had committed a most shameful crime. And she felt his suspicion an insult, any attempt to defend herself a degradation. How small they all were! How could they have such ideas about her, Augusta, a Christian? But she wanted to persuade her husband of her innocence. It could not be that a silly misunderstanding would dissolve their happiness, their confidence of so many years.*

The interests involved, however, were very great, and her enemies never slept. They had drawn up a careful plan for her destruction. Every day they attacked Theodosios' injured soul with new suspicions. They whispered little phrases softly, supposedly so that he should not hear them.

"Why, when Athenais was away, did Paulinos disappear from the court?"

"They were seen together at the Palace of Laos."

The Emperor's life was dark. He could no longer think sensibly. He could not reason simply that if Paulinos were guilty, he would never have sent the apple.

In the pro-narthex of an old Byzantine church,* an artist has pictured the slanderer in Hell. He is suspended by his heels, his tongue hangs out. From below rise fire and smoke. How light a punishment for the terrible disasters which deceit and cowardice bring about! The victim does not know where the

fury comes from, nor can he defend himself.

Athenais-Eudocia asked to see the Emperor again. They answered that he was unable to receive her. Perhaps they did not even tell him of her request. More and more a nightmarish circle of hateful, self-interested men was strangling the Emperor and putting poison into his open wound.

At last, looking for some refuge, Athenais asked the Patriarch to assign her a personal priest. He gave her for her confessor the excellent cleric Severus. The queen made her confession to him, told him her most inward thoughts. She had not yet relinquished all hope. As long as her friend Kyros was prefect of the royal city, she could not really have lost Theodosios' sympathy. But she had not reckoned on the fiendish way in which her opponents were operating. First they were determined to bring about a difficult thing: the wife must be utterly rooted out of her husband's heart. Then gradually the friends would fall without her support. They themselves would preserve the mask of devotion, would easily be trusted.

Severus the priest advised her not to be proud. Athenais asked again to see her husband. She could not leave him in this doubt, this torture. How he must be suffering! Perhaps even more than she. But again Theodosios refused to receive her.

Must she then remain accused without being allowed to defend herself, carrying on her shoulders the shameful accusation? Desperate, she knew that every passing day fed the suspicion, made it more of a certainty. Every hour either tore it down or built it up. For the first time the queen felt powerless. And, as the chronicle says vividly, between the

king and the queen came disunion and withdrawal.*

* * * * *

It was all so improbable. The apple, this fruit which is so wonderful to the folk mind, has always been at the start of the catastrophe. The snake gave it to Eve, and the ancestral curse followed. Paris offered it to Aphrodite, and the jealous goddesses destroyed Troy. But here in our story under the fruit of knowledge lurked pitiless passions. Opportunists wanted to seize power. They were indifferent to disasters, to the destruction of the country.

The great queen Eudocia, at the highest point of her life and work, was ruined. She lost her husband, her empire, but, above all, she lost her honor. With a deep consciousness of her personal and historical dignity, to her last hour she was to protest against this disgrace.*

To be sure nobody dared to offend her openly, not even the Emperor, who did not wish to confess his suspicions before the eyes of the world. Life continued as before in the palace. But the whispers in the corners increased day by day, and the people close to her grew fewer in number.

The magistrate Paulinos must be exiled as far away as possible, to Caesarea in Cappadocia. That was the king's first wish. He could not tolerate his presence in the court.

* * * * *

It was the summer of 441 when the first great murder took place. Theodosios gave the order to kill the

exile in Caesarea. To kill his childhood friend, the sponsor at his wedding, the magistrate Paulinos. Fear and grief overwhelmed the nobles. For thirty years now this true patrician had been inseparable from the Emperor; noble and dedicated to the royal family, willing always to help them; all honorable people adored him.

Who pushed the gentle, God-fearing Theodosios to give this order? Where was his calmness of spirit, which never deserted him? How was it no Christian stopped him?

Thunderstruck, Athenais heard in terror the incomprehensible news. How could such an abomination have taken place? It could not be imagined. If only they could go back to the time when he was still alive, when the air was not polluted with crime. But it was irreparable. What was done was not to be undone, could not be otherwise. Theodosios was a murderer. He was Cain. A nightmare seized her. To get away, only to get away. The palace was a fire which was consuming her. The spectre of the strangled Paulinos was everywhere. She saw him always covered with blood—her friend, her brother. Ideas and images were tangled together in her head. Was this the way to repay their great debt to him? Day after day he had spread his thought and his soul in their path just to see some smile on their lips. From the first moment when the free Athenian girl was plunged into the suffocating Byzantine tradition, how he had tried to create some atmosphere of her Greek homeland around her! How he had stood by her! When little Flacilla died he was concerned every moment with her overpowering grief. It was then that he had taken her to the famous palace

of the favorite, Laos. And Athenais had forgotten her anguish for a while as she looked in wonder at the great masterpieces, the Olympian Zeus of Phidias, the Aphrodite of Praxiteles, which he had sacrilegiously gathered there.

Paulinos had helped in the organization of the University of Constantinople. He had worked for the *Codex Theodosianus.* And finally, he had warmly supported the appointment of Flavius Kyros. But even if he had adored her and if she had loved him, which of the two would ever have dared to confess it, even to himself?

To go away, so as not to see, not to hear. If possible to forget. What place was there among men of hate for her, who knew only how to love?

"My nature is to love, not hate."*

How could the vulgar understand this, whose only law was self-interest?

The thought of leaving was rooted in her heart. But to go at this moment would still further darken the Emperor's mind. He would believe the worst. She had to wait.

A void opened around her. Except for her retinue and the priest Severus, no one came near her. The courtiers were possessed by cowardice and panic. Where was the day when they had jostled each other in her anteroom, where they all sang her praises and swore eternal loyalty? But all that was conventional.

Kyros was shaken when he heard the news. In despair he considered the Empress' position. Always brave, he asked to see her. But on no account would she receive him. She wanted no further crime. He, at least, must be spared.

CHAPTER XVI

Kyros knew that his time was short. They were lying in wait for him. He worked tirelessly night and day. The walls were finished. Now he concerned himself with the lighting of the royal city, with the restoration of the public buildings ruined by earthquakes. Soon the capital was unrecognizable. Fortified, renovated, lighted, it was an oasis toward which everyone yearned.*

But now during the holidays of August fifteenth in 441, he could no longer avoid the occasion for which his enemies had been biding their time. There were games in the hippodrome. The stands were full of people. The patricians, the nobles, dressed in gold, entered one after the other with their retinues.

Last to enter before the Emperor, simple, unattended, was the Prefect, Flavius Kyros. Insofar as possible, he wished to pass unobserved. But the people knew him because of their daily contact with him and as soon as they saw him, they broke out into uncontrolled delirium. More than triumph, more than gratitude, their enthusiasm was adoration. Ceaseless hand-clapping, hurrahs, cries of joy, and, in the midst of it all, the same phrase was heard time and again: "Constantine built the city; Kyros rebuilt it. Let him be Augustus!" The Emperor now arrived with his entourage, including Chrysaphios, and the people continued. "Kyros re-

built the city—let him be Augustus." The words were lost in the cheers and the din, and only one was clearly heard: "Kyros. . . Kyros."

Kyros did not stand up to thank them. And with the wise man's melancholy smile, he said softly to his friends, "I do not like it when fortune smiles too much."* How right he was!

Theodosios had never heard such lively public response for himself. It shook the whole hippodrome. Envy seized his heart. Beside him Chrysaphios was smiling. From that moment Kyros was a condemned man. Who would save him, now that Athenais was thrust aside, isolated, and no longer able to see the king?

The following day he was accused as an idolater. He was stripped of every office and honor. His property was confiscated. Kyros took refuge in St. Stephen's. But even there the Emperor ordered him to be arrested and dressed in a monk's habit.* It was the quickest way to isolate him from the world. He wanted to exile Kyros from the city and deprive him of his life.

This is the only way to explain why he was made Bishop of Kotyaion in Phrygia where, up to that time, the savage inhabitants had killed four bishops.

At the golden gate of the royal city, which he himself had built, the poet Kyros stood and mourned his native land:

> If only my father had taught me to herd the wooly sheep
> Sitting under elm trees or on a rocky cliff,
> And blowing on my flute to chase away my sorrow.
> Pierian Muses, let us leave the well-built city.
> Let us find another homeland. To all men let us proclaim

That the ruinous drones have destroyed the bees.
And later,

To Hope, and to you, Fortune, greetings! I am going away.
I have no further pleasure in you. And the two of you,
Go on your way, taking with you the errors which you generate in mortals.
You make us imagine things that certainly are not going to happen,
And you make us think they will happen.
Away with you, evil idols, full of grief, away with both of you.
Mock as you will those who come after me.
Who do not understand these things which they ought to understand.

How much bitterness was contained in these frugal lines!*

* * * * *

Flavius Kyros passed all his hours of leisure with classical literature, with poetry. His ecclesiastical learning was less.

Christmas found him in Kotyaion in the midst of a primitive people, wearing his black habit, surrounded by spies. He did not have time to think of his misfortune, so great was his effort to survive. He studied the texts of the Christmas service, come what might, he celebrated the liturgy.

Meanwhile the Christian community had been informed that he was condemned as an idolater. After

the liturgy, seeking to lead him into a blind alley to kill him, they urgently requested a sermon. Wishing to avoid it, Kyros mounted the rostrum and said, with readiness, "Brethren, the birth of God and of our Savior Jesus Christ should be honored by silence because only by listening did the Holy Virgin conceive the Logos. To Him be the glory, world without end. Amen."*

The Christians of Kotyaion were quieted, and Kyros, now bishop, came down from the rostrum and blessed his flock with full hierarchical formality.

In Constantinople at that time there were such earthquakes that no one dared stay indoors. People poured out of the city in an all-night procession. They begged that the Emperor's sins be forgiven.

CHAPTER XVII

So the absence of Kyros from the city was final. "The ruinous drones had destroyed the bees."

Chrysaphios was* now at last triumphant, the only one left who was close to the Emperor, a law unto himself. The party of the Greens, which he supported, was now all-powerful. What delighted him was intrigue, vengeance, and wealth. He would murder, he would sell his services, he would accept bribes. Without reason, at the end of 441, he gave the order to murder the faithful Vandal, John, in Thrace. John, loyal to the palace, had become Master of the Guard. Theodosios submitted blindly to all Chrysaphios' desires. He never punished him, always listened to him, protected him.

The Huns at this same time had inundated the most beautiful province of Illyria and were plundering it. The royal capital was incapable of action, indifferent.

Eudocia's sadness was like a heavy sickness. Her friends were persecuted or killed, she herself defamed. The city was discussing the murder of Paulinos.* She imagined that everyone was suspecting her, attacking her. She had nothing in common now with those who were ruling. All around her she saw the important, urgent problems which threatened the country, and she thought to herself that the leaders were not equal to the age they were living in. They could neither

conceive the problems nor face them. Nor were they in a position to seek out and listen to good advisers. Leadership meant intelligence, foresight, courage. It meant that the effort to create a synthesis would not be split by trivialities. It meant instinctive judgment of the quality of human beings. There was no place for flatterers and slanderers. The common people have a remarkably sharp intuition in this matter.

Athenais remembered how at the beginning of her marriage she longed to be able to admire the Emperor bravely marshalling his army. It was not merely the dream of a proud young woman; it was the deep psychological need of the people of the time. All the inhabitants of the boundless Empire wanted their king to be fearless like St. Constantine, like Theodosios the Great, to protect them against the Alarics and the Attilas.

How alone she was in this superficial world of the palace! Amidst this servile flattery which made men into worms, and deprived of dignity and will the foolish ones who listened!

The queen felt powerless against life's unreasoning hatred. But God submitted to the world's evil, and gave Himself to be crucified. What a warm vision of love was His death! "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."*

Only to escape from the palace of the royal capital. The gray heavens seemed to be coming down and crushing her with monstrous men, murderous, cruel, empty. Above all empty, without faith, without values, without discipline of work.

Only to flee, to flee; but where? She thought of her daughter's angelic face. What balm for her wounded

spirit to see her for only a moment, to touch her! But this was not feasible. It would only hurt Eudoxia if her mother took refuge with her. Nor for a moment did she consider the court in Ravenna. She knew instinctively what an effort it required for Eudoxia to salvage a little joy with her children. Between the faithless and mistrusting Valentinian and his authoritarian mother, her life was certainly not easy. The example of Honoria had long troubled her. She was still imprisoned in some monastery in the royal city, and neither her mother, Placidia, nor Pulcheria was concerned to improve her lot.

Only to flee, to flee; but where? In desperation, she appealed passionately to Christ. For a long time now she had lost Him. It was hard for her to concentrate on spiritual ideas. Her soul was dry, earth without water, under the weight of injustice. If only she could find a little peace, not feel herself a sinner. Sin was not always an evil deed or the breaking of the commandments. It could be a psychic condition which impeded prayer, our union with the source of life.

In her loneliness she wrestled with the spectres of her soul, with her own thoughts. Everything was momentary and meaningless. The only meaning was God; she was a creature sinking and holding on in terror to the thread which united her with her Maker. To flee, to flee. She envisioned Golgotha; and as a luminous logical consequence, there spread before her an endless vision—Jerusalem.

God opens His arms and pours out to us His miracles. Let him who will be ready to seize them and open his heart to receive them. Let him who will take the road of great preparation to become worthy to receive them.

Athenais understood the miracle which God had made manifest to her. She would go to Jerusalem. There no one would be able to talk about her.

Immediately she asked the Emperor's permission. He did not refuse her. Perhaps this decision was a relief to him. In the impasse where he now found himself, he accepted this solution. It was worthy of a queen.

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A second time the Empress started for Jerusalem. Nothing indicated to the outside world that she had lost the Emperor's favor. Her retinue was rich, her allowance ample. She followed the same route, only she passed by Antioch without stopping.

Unwillingly she kept recalling the joy of her first journey. But how her heart had aged! In these few years she had come to know the total evil of mankind.

Among those who accompanied her was her faithful priest, Severus. She had now added another cleric, the deacon John. On the road from the sea to the holy city, scattered with lonely chapels, they often stopped and the priests officiated. With the queen's example, an atmosphere of piety and love dominated the entire following.

So, in 444 Eudocia reached Jerusalem. Bishop Juvenal and the notables of the city received her with honor and affection. Their debt to the queen was great. Nuns had decorated a whole guest house for her and her

retinue. The inhabitants came to see her, to welcome her. And Athenais, free at last, breathed deeply. She felt that Jerusalem was her homeland. Here they did not spy on her, did not suspect her. She felt uplifted, once more herself, as God had formed her. And at last she hoped for peace.

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But it was not so simple. The monster of slander followed her even here. It appeared that Theodosios still thought of her with passion.

Was the Emperor really so maddened by jealousy? How could this devout Christian give orders to Saturninus, the captain of the guards, to carry out a double murder beside Christ's tomb—orders to kill her two priest friends, Severus and John?*

Her faithful followers came in terror, and only with difficulty found words to tell the queen what had happened. And they themselves did not understand very well. The captain of the guard with his adjutants had entered the guest-house where the royal entourage was staying, and there they killed the priests, Severus and John. What had happened just before? What happened after? Struggle? Resistance? No one could be sure. And Saturninus was also found dead.* All these things were very obscure.*

Certainly it was not possible that Athenais was present. Never would the patrician Saturninus have dared to carry out such a hideous crime before the queen.

There was great commotion in the palace when the death of the Count Saturninus became known. Na-

turally the queen was held accountable. There was endless effort to open more and more the abyss between Theodosios and Athenais. They made use of the most unlikely slanders. Only a shining personality like hers would have endured to the end.

In order to punish her the Emperor gave orders that the royal entourage should be recalled. For the first time Augusta Eudocia was deprived of her royal honors. But she was quite indifferent to this. In the atmosphere of Jerusalem what she cared about was her tormented soul.

Athenais was deeply wounded by the successive murders of her friends. She was choked with anguish. The bloodshed would never end. She knew it. As a child she had heard the lines:

There is the sea—and who shall drain it?
Which holds much purple, constantly renewed.

What others would fall? Perhaps she herself. And certainly she would have been murdered had she not been the mother of the Empress of the West. A morbid fear took hold of her. She went near no one. She lived alone. A black shadow followed her silently. The stains were spreading.

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At last in Constantinople they began to forget the queen, and she too began to forget. Gradually she adjusted to the holy city. She wanted to live with the ascetics. She felt that the pulse of Jerusalem was the adoration of Christ, was compassion for man. This wise woman listened to the Gospels and she wept. "So great the mystery around us. Every hour which

comes, light and shadow according to God's great plan. All that is left is goodness for its own sake." She helped the unfortunate. The sick were so many, the poverty so cruel.

Her grief and her concern for her daughter so far away had gouged out the darkest depths of her soul. Her whole personal life consisted in waiting for messages from Eudoxia and dispatching her own in return. She had regular messengers in her service. Every so often she sent holy relics. She described her life, her work. She tried to imagine her grandchildren. She felt more in common with them than if she had seen and known them. In order to live, she tried to forget this longing of hers, this open wound.

And her daughter adored her. She remembered her from childhood as her great ideal. By word and example she had taught her whatever was noble. Now from afar she followed her mother's every act. Her most recent trials had imparted to Athenais a special grace. And the young Empress owed her mother gratitude in this critical time for escaping the impasse by going away to Jerusalem. She was greatly respected and even the austere Placidia had praised her. The life of the deposed Empress had linked itself to Golgotha.

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The work which Athenais conceived and carried out in Jerusalem was great. First she would rebuild the entire wall. On her previous visit she had begun the foundations. She would cover the beautiful gate of the temple with gold so that coming generations would remember the place where Peter and John had healed

the lame man.

She had drawn up complete building plans.* Near the Church of the Resurrection she would build an episcopal palace and a large inn for pilgrims. It was not proper for them to sleep in the churches. Then there would be homes for the aged, the poor, the sick— everywhere. Human misery, poverty, illness must not disfigure the holy city. There must be no poor man without help, no old man without care. She would build churches. In many parts of the desert she would build monasteries and would bring together the scattered cells. In the desert of Judaea the basilica of the Monastery of St. Euthemios. She would fortify the exposed hermitage of St. Savas with an impregnable strength.

She worked night and day, planning, supervising. She was always ready to listen to the troubles of the Christians and to help them. She wanted nothing for herself. The royal stipend, though diminished, was still large. She spent it all for Christ's work. It is reckoned that in the last seventeeen years of her life she spent for the buildings and for the maintenance of the holy city 20,840 pounds of gold. She herself lived in monastic simplicity. But she ruled the land. Such was the love of the Christians, of the monks for Queen Eudocia, that her prestige was unlimited, her tie with the people very deep. Plainly dressed, with her imperial bearing she moved through the streets and the wayfarers fell to their knees as she passed by.

Everything is a seed when the soul is fertile ground. The calamity of her life germinated in Jerusalem and brought forth the grain of goodness. Above the antitheses of evil and virtue, of ugliness and beauty, she felt the warm rays of the sun, God's miraculous synthesis.

CHAPTER XVIII

In the royal capital Theodosios, without Athenais, was more and more on the decline.

The savage Huns had moved ahead; they had crossed the Danube; they had poured onto the Thracian peninsula, killing and pillaging. Their leader, Attila, this scourge of God, was scattering fire and death wherever he passed. The Emperor's armies were defeated on all fronts. The barbarians were moving on toward the Bosporos. The unheroic king was nowhere to be seen. What saved the city was its walls, the walls of Kyros. There the swarms of Huns stopped and were decimated.

Thus in 447 Theodosios could sign a peace, even though it was a shameful one. He ceded to Attila the lands within a five day march south of the Danube. He gave him money and a yearly tribute. Furthermore, he surrendered all the prisoners who had taken refuge in the capital.

It was a tragic treaty for all the populations along the Danube. It was tragic for the honor of the Empire. But the royal city was saved. Otherwise the aspect of the world would have been different.

But something else happened to make Attila turn westward: an episode like the fairy tale of the enslaved princess.

Pulcheria had kept Valentinian's sister, Honoria,

always locked up in a convent. The young girl, isolated, romantic, with an unbridled imagination, heard about the valiant conquests of the so-called scourge of God. She saw him in her dreams, fearless, handsome. The panic of the people around her convent confirmed his fame. Her mother had abandoned her, had chased her from the palace, from her native land, like a creature defiled. She hated Pulcheria. And indeed that austere woman had never deigned to listen to her with the slightest sympathy. Now at last, here was Attila, an avenging archangel. Only he could liberate her. Honoria carefully observed the preparations for Theodosios' embassy to the king of the Huns. She picked out a man from the enemy side. Promising him a great reward, she secretly gave him a letter for Attila and her ring. She told Attila who she was. She told him that she wanted to be his wife. She offered as her dowry her heriditary rights to the throne of the Great Theodosios.

Attila was enthusiastic. What more delightful than an imprisoned young woman asking his help and bringing with her a whole kingdom? New roads were opening to him. He saw himself the lawful Emperor of the West. By the same embassy he asked that his betrothed be released to him.

The story was heard in the city. Terrified, Pulcheria responded instantly by tying up the young Honoria, putting her secretly on a boat, and sending her to her mother in Ravenna. Placidia quickly betrothed her and Honoria disappeared.

At that point Attila started full sail for the West. He sought the princess persistently, but she was nowhere to be found.

Thus the foreign wars with the Huns came to an end for Byzantium. But a more terrible one began, the civil war.

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Having helped to bring about the self-exile of Eudocia, Chrysaphios now wanted to put Pulcheria out of the way. Poor Theodosios listened to the eunuch like an automaton, only to him and to no one else. Pulcheria could not prosper in so corrupt an atmosphere. Nor could she share the responsibility for acts of which she disapproved. She abandoned the palace and went to her personal palace at Vlachernae.

The Patriarch Proclos had died in 447 and been succeeded by Flavianos. On his ascent to the patriarchal throne, Flavianos was supposed, according to the new custom, to send "golden blessings" to the Prime Minister, Chrysaphios. He was a venerable man who did not condescend to bribery, and he therefore sent "bread blessings" in accordance with the old Christian custom.* This was sufficient to make the eunuch consider this peaceful cleric his enemy and to will his destruction.

But there was still another reason which brought about a confrontation between Chrysaphios and the prelate. Near Constantinople there was a monastery with three hundred monks. Its abbot was the archimandrite Eutyches, the spiritual father of Chrysaphios. Eutyches was not a writer, but he taught that the union with the divine Logos had as a consequence the deification of the human nature of Christ.* It was the absolute opposite of Nestorian doctrine. This

theory, monophysitism, had old roots. The fanatical followers of Cyril professed it. For this reason monophysite ideas had taken hold in many provinces of the Empire, especially among monks.

Many Christians who had a propensity for mysticism were monophysites because this doctrine was wrongly identified in their thinking with mysticism. In the royal city their leader was Eutyches.

As in every religious dispute, there were men of good faith as well as those who served only their own interests. So Chrysaphios became a monophysite, supporting Eutyches in order to destroy Flavianos. Naturally, the Emperor became a monophysite also.

Antioch, as the center of Nestorianism, was the first to fight monophysitism. It lodged a complaint against Eutyches at the permanent council in Constantinople. The council deposed him from his position as abbot of the monastery and excommunicated him. Eutyches made an appeal to Pope Leo of Rome and to Dioscoros of Alexandria.

When the Pope received the decisions of the council of Constantinople, he wrote to Patriarch Flavianos in 449 a dogmatic epistle which could be summarized in the phrase: "two natures and substances in one person."* It was obvious from the epistle that this one person was the divine Logos.

Dioscoros of Alexandria supported Eutyches against Flavianos. For the third time the church of Alexandria took a stand against the patriarch of the imperial capital. And this time the heretic was Dioscoros. The emperor for the third time supported the throne of Alexandria. He called a council in Ephesos in 449 and made Dioscoros president. The Patriarch of Con-

stantinople had no voting rights. But they gave a vote to an abbot who was representing the Syrian monks. This man had armed the monks with sticks and shovels. They pillaged the churches of the Nestorians near the Euphrates. They burned their monasteries and killed their bishops.

Then all these terrifying groups arrived at Ephesos. The teaching of Eutyches, "two natures before the union, one after it," was recognized as orthodox. Eutyches was acquitted. Then they proposed the purging of Flavianos. There were objections; the terrorism increased. Flavianos was physically ejected from the church and dismissed. In vain the Roman delegation asked that the Pope's letter be read to the council. Nobody listened to them. The monks shouted and threatened. Everything happened as Dioscoros and Eutyches wanted it. The Emperor put his seal on the decisions of the council and exiled the patriarch of the capital. Flavianos did not manage to arrive at the place of his exile. On the way his persecutors killed him.

Theodosios' daughter Eudoxia, Augusta Placidia, Valentinian, and above all Pope Leo with his great prestige, all these begged Theodosios to reconsider his decisions about the Council of Ephesos.* Always obedient to Chrysaphios, the Emperor answered that the Council had convened and made its decisions freely. Dioscoros returned triumphant to Alexandria. For the third time, the Patriarch of Constantinople was exterminated.

CHAPTER XIX

But the day of divine judgment on the horrible crimes of Chrysaphios was no longer to be delayed.

At the White River, the king's horse stumbled and threw its rider. Theodosios sustained a grave injury to his spine. His pain was unbearable. He could not be moved. A messenger from his retinue ran immediately to Vlachernae to inform Pulcheria. They prepared a stretcher and with utmost care they carried the Emperor to the sacred palace .

The best doctors of the capital were at his bedside, trying to relieve him, to save him. But in vain. Every hour he became worse. He himself felt that the end was nearing. After a period of unconsciousness, in a moment of clarity, for the first time in his life, he was possessed by a feeling of responsiblity. Who would govern his boundless empire?

He called near him his sister, General Aspar, and the senators. In an official statement, he told them that he had seen St. John the Theologian in a dream, and that the saint had made visible to him as his successor and husband to Pulcheria the patrician Marcian.* These were his last words.

On July 28, 450, Theodosios II died. The capital was in turmoil. There was commotion in the palace. They dressed him in his royal vestments. They decked

him with his chiton, with his crown. The Emperor's body guard lifted his bier, and carried it through the crowded hippodrome. The people fell on their knees, crossing themselves repeatedly. They bore him to the great Ericlinon chamber and placed him on the golden bed of sorrow. All the senators were there. The clergy of St. Sophia came, chanting, to say farewell to him. The laity too came to see him for the last time.

Then the chief eunuch with great formality addressed Theodosios: "Enter in, O King. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords calls you."* Once more the royal guard lifted the Emperor and carried him passing by the gate of Chalki, to the place of the grave, in the Church of the Holy Apostles. Dressed in white, Pulcheria followed.* The nobles came after her, and the people, dressed in black.

In the church they sang the requiem. At the end the chief eunuch again drew near quietly and addressed Theodosios: "Enter in, O King. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords calls you. Lay down your crown." He bent over and removed the crown. In its place he put a simple ribbon of purple. Theodosios was no more.

In far-off Jerusalem, Athenais grieved for the Emperor. He was the only man she had known, the father of her daughter. But events were irrevocable. Nor did the Empire interest her. She placed no value on her right to the throne of Byzantium. She knew that it was a lost cause.

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In an official ceremony the senate proclaimed Pulcheria Empress .

In these difficult times wise Pulcheria, alone on the throne of the Eastern Empire, was vulnerable. She chose the sensible Marcian to be her husband.* He was from Thrace, the son of a simple warrior. But he was a brave man. Their marriage was a Platonic one. The vow of chastity which she took as a young girl forbade a true marriage. On August 25, 450, in St. Stephen's and in the presence of the Patriarch, Marcian was proclaimed Emperor. With his own hands he placed the crown on his head.

The first act of the new king and queen was to punish Chrysaphios. They turned him over to Jordanus, son of the Vandal John, whom the eunuch had killed without cause. And Jordanus put him to death.*

Next they wished to restore the honor of the Patriarch, Flavianos. His remains were transported solemnly to the capital. They too were deposited in the Church of the Holy Apostles. There emperors and patriarchs, executioners and victims, were sleeping the sleep of eternity.

But the Empire was torn by the hatred between the Orthodox and the heretics. The unity of the Church was in great danger. Pulcheria considered it her principal duty to restore the Orthodox faith. A gigantic enterprise! Theodosios' last years had been years of misery for his kingdom. Many times she had thought to herself what a disaster it had been for her brother to be without his wife. How could she herself have made this mistake? How could she have committed this crime? How could she have let the vile and corrupt Chrysaphios dominate her brother? Perhaps in

the beginning a mere word from her would have prevented murders and catastrophes. But she had not spoken that word. Her thoughts now turned sympathetically toward the exiled queen.

Augusta Pulcheria, away from the sacred palace, had been absolutely powerless to serve Theodosios, and she had followed with apprehension the last devastating council which had brought about the official division of the Church. She felt weak, her health impaired. Now that she had all the power she must not delay even a moment. In October, 451, she convened the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Nicaea. But she moved it immediately to Chalcedon so that cooperation with the court would be easier, her influence more certain. Pope Leo, who shared her ideas, advised her and helped her. His representative would serve as President of the Council. Emperor Marcian himself solemnly proclaimed its opening. With Pulcheria he followed its deliberations regularly.

This Fourth Ecumenical Council of 451 at Chalcedon again dismissed Eutyches and Dioscoros. It formulated the statement concerning the nature of Christ. It set down the order of the episcopal hierarchy. It placed all the patriarchs of the East under Constantinople. Thus, formally at least, it solved the religious problem. And it organized the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

CHAPTER XX

But in Egypt and in Palestine the monophysites were dominant. The Council had designated an Orthodox patriarch for Alexandria to replace Dioscoros. The mob killed him in the baptistery of the cathedral and put a monophysite in his place. Likewise in Antioch they forced the Orthodox patriarch to resign and chose a monophysite to succeed him.

In Palestine the turmoil had culminated in revolution. At least ten thousand monks were passionate monophysites. The crafty Egyptian monk, Theodosios, roused them against Juvenal, who had accepted the Council's decision. Quackery, self-interest and hate, faith and religion, murderers and saints were all mixed together.

The revolutionaries entrenched themselves in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Before they would open to Bishop Juvenal, they demanded that he renounce the decisions of the Council. He would not renounce them. Only with difficulty did he escape from the fury of the mutineers and return to Constantinople.

The monks, the anchorites from the desert around the holy city, poured out of their caves. They rushed madly on Jerusalem. They opened the prisons, and all together, criminals and religious fanatics, they set fire to houses, killed innocent citizens, pillaged the

city. Then they dismissed Juvenal and in his place declared Theodosios Bishop of Palestine. This monophysite as bishop became a veritable tyrant in Judaea. He purged and killed bishops, replacing them with monophysites. Terrorism spread throughout the country.

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Eudocia had accepted monophysitism from the First Council of Ephesos. Her mystical soul believed in the divine nature of Christ. Her whole thought and will concurred, "I know This Our God." Her adoration needed the climate of that doctrine. She could not compromise. She had dedicated her whole life to Christ.

The commotion roundabout frightened her. Above all she was frightened by these criminals and charlatans who had penetrated the ranks of her pure friends, the anchorites. The religious fanaticism of these good, simple men was so great that they killed the Orthodox and thought they were killing the devil. In spite of her influence, she could not stem the tide; it was impossible. But why all this? She herself believed passionately in the divine nature of Christ; she hoped that theory would prevail. There in Palestine, between Syria and Egypt, Orthodoxy was the exception; everyone was monophysite. She saw the unity of the Church in monophysitism. Her husband the Emperor had died a monophysite. All her friends were monophysites. And she did not care about Pulcheria.

For twenty months the rebels had the city in their power. Finallly in 453, Emperor Marcian sent Count Dorotheos with a whole army to pacify Palestine.

Bishop Juvenal accompanied him. Dorotheos besieged and laid waste cities as if they were enemy territory so that he could advance as far as Jerusalem. When he arrived there, he found the gates locked. After a struggle he conquered the city. The rebel Theodosios was able to escape toward Mount Sinai with some of his followers. Count Dorotheos again installed Juvenal as Bishop.

The Byzantine army honored the exiled Empress and treated her with great respect. These were certainly its orders from the capital. After the death of Theodosios, Pulcheria in every way showed herself favorably disposed to the no longer dangerous Athenais, as did Marcian. Her standards and her way of life had a halo about them and impressed even her enemies. Augusta Pulcheria asked Eudocia's brothers, especially the patrician Valerian to write to her, to persuade her to return to Orthodoxy. Pulcheria greatly desired religious unity, first of all among the members of her own family, and then throughout the Empire.

Palestine now became more peaceful. The anchorites went back to their caves. The Bishop of Jerusalem, the Orthodox Juvenal, was governing the city. But Athenais could not abandon her faith. Its roots were too deep. Her beloved daughter begged her; Emperor Valentinian begged her. Even the great pope who strengthened the papacy, who twice saved Rome, wrote to her very courteously.* He asked her to help the monks avoid the schism. Out of delicacy, he did not mention any doubt about her own Orthodoxy. The letter was written with great care. It expressed the hope that Christianity would benefit from her presence in that place where the testimony of the Passion presented

the Savior as True God and True Man.

Athenais had herself been a ruler. She knew how significant was the unity of the state, the unity of the Church. She knew that the art of politics requires gradual adjustment, that among its purposes is the harmonious synthesis of dissimilar men. Now that the army had taken over, the monophysites could no longer hope to prevail. The logical thing for them to do was to submit. She was tormented by the thought that she herself might do some harm, might play a part in creating the great breach. She understood Pope Leo's point of view when he spoke of the fear of schism. Her daughter's pleading went to her very heart.

But how could she change when this was what she believed? She felt like the first Christians who were ready to fall to the lions rather than deny their faith. Whole and honest, she had been thrust into an impasse.

But then great disaster struck this much tormented woman like a thunderbolt: the catastrophe of her daughter.

CHAPTER XXI

The lovely Eudoxia, wife of Valentinian III, lived with her husband and his mother, Placidia, in Ravenna. Her life was certainly not easy. Ravenna was small, surrounded by swamps and fortifications, and it could not compare with Rome. Placidia was an authoritarian and dominated her children. Valentinian, unheroic like Theodosios, allowed the Roman provinces, one after the other, to fall into barbarian hands. With the loss of Africa, Brittany, Spain, Gaul,* the glorious Roman state was disintegrating daily. The tradition of military valor had been wiped out. Here and there a brave general saved the situation temporarily.

In Ravenna Eudoxia learned with sorrow of the death of her father, Theodosios. But she had no time to weep for him. There was another grief within her own palace to occupy her. Augusta Placidia was very ill. She died that same year, 450. With full honors they placed her body in the beautiful mausoleum which we still see today. How many years she had been the real ruler!

Eudoxia breathed more easily. At last she would be able to live freely with the Augustus, with her daughters. But now impudent Attila came with his hordes to take Rome. Certain of victory, he contemptuously ordered the Emperor to prepare the palace for

him. At that point the first Senator, General Aetius, angrily asked to undertake the city's defense. He met Alaric in Gaul and made an alliance with him. The two joined forces and made a sudden attack on Attila. They decimated his army and subdued him in the battle of Chalons. In this battle in 451 Alaric was killed.*

Aetius' victory was celebrated enthusiastically throughout the West. Empress Eudoxia was given great honors. At last they could see some hope of security. Perhaps they would be able to establish themselves in Rome.

But Attila wanted to wipe out the shame of his defeat. He prepared new armies, and the following year he savagely invaded Italy, demolishing and pillaging the cities in his way. The terrified inhabitants fled, taking with them whatever valuables they could carry. The flames of the Italian cities lighted Rome.

Suddenly the gates of the eternal city opened and a long procession moved forward, singing psalms. Pope Leo with his clergy dressed in golden vestments, and the senators, all marched toward Pavia,* which was burning like a great candle. Near the river they confronted Attila. There they pleaded with him to respect Rome, to respect Italy.

What miracle occurred to make their supplication warm the barbarian's heart? Perhaps God took pity on the prayers of just men. Attila turned toward the East. There were night-long services of thanksgiving in the churches.

Now Empress Eudoxia, Valentinian, the princesses and the whole court lived in the palace in Rome. Eudoxia, in all her splendor, at last felt safe. For the first time Valentinian was really Emperor. His austere mother was no longer his guardian. And Attila was far from the

borders of the country. Established in the palace of the Roman emperors, where everything recalled triumph and conquest, he considered himself omnipotent. All the grandeur round about was his.

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Then in September, 453 came the incredible news from Byzantium that Pulcheria was dead. The silence of bereavement spread through the palace. For forty years now, in fair weather and in foul, this woman had dominated the Eastern firmament. She had supported the Orthodox Church; she had supported the dynasty. Pope Leo was also grieved and he comforted Augusta Eudoxia. He was aware of his loss. He well knew what a precious ally Pulcheria was in every ecclesiastical problem, what respect she had always shown him, more surely than for the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Pulcheria's opposition to Eudocia had deeply embittered Eudoxia. But now that she was gone, she remembered only that this woman was her dead father's sister, remembered the caresses of her childhood. Eudoxia wept most of all for their last great ally in Byzantium, for the sure protection which was now definitely lost.

Perhaps she was the only person in the world who really suffered because of Pulcheria's death. All the others were strangers. When they heard the news in Constantinople the people crossed themselves in fear. They learned that she had left all her possessions to the poor, and they blessed her name. Many went to pray at the Church of the Virgin which she had built at Vlachernae. Marcian, without much sorrow, buried

her with the honors appropriate to the Augusta. The tie between them had been short and only official. The Church would proclaim her a saint.

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Power always has its worm, the slanderer. Flatterers gathered around Valentinian. They praised him; they whispered to him what they knew he was afraid to hear: that the praiseworthy Aetius, beloved of the Romans, was planning to take the crown from him, that Aetius was conspiring with others. Valentinian did not stop to reflect. Foolish and unhesitating, he decided to kill with his own hands, like a common murderer, the last great Roman general.*

But this was not all. He wanted to possess every woman who attracted him. After all, was he not the Emperor? He felt no obligation to the senators of the country, and had no respect for the laws. He raped and dishonored the patrician Roman woman who was the beautiful wife of the Senator Maximus.

Beside himself, Maximus sought revenge. All the fellow-warriors and friends of Aetius were also seeking vengeance. They conspired among themselves and determined to do away with Valentinian. On the field of Mars in Rome, on March 16, 455, the Augustus fell under the swords of the avengers.

The Empress Eudoxia did not know of his crimes. She was desperate when she learned of his death. At scarcely thirty-two she was a widow. Her life seemed at an end. But she had unavoidable responsibilities. She was the last of the dynasty, along with her daughters, Placidia and Eudocia, so lovely in the flower of their

youth. Placidia's husband, the young patrician Flavius Olybrius, was at that time absent from Rome.

There was no time to think. Immediately after the murder of Valentinian, Maximus was proclaimed Emperor. In order to make his right to the throne more certain, he compelled the queen, Eudoxia, daughter of Theodosios, widow of Valentinian, to become his wife. Furthermore, he forced the young Eudocia to marry his son Palladius, whom he appointed Caesar.

Augusta Eudoxia had adored her husband since she was a little girl; she could not believe that he was lost to her. Her forced marriage to Maximus was unbearable. Her soul was darkened with grief. One evening, when Maximus, in order to demonstrate the fullness of his power, revealed to her that he himself had killed Valentinian, she was seized with madness, disgust, horror. Was this then the civilization of the Romans? Nothing but hatred and the instinct for survival? Better the primitive barbarians; they at least were truthful, with honest natures like animals.

How to escape? The hands which embraced her in the night were stained with Valentinian's blood. She hated Maximus, hated her own body. Death was everywhere. Her apartments in the palace of Rome were like an asphyxiating prison. She recalled the gloomy palace at Ravenna as a paradise.

Where should she go? Theodosios and Pulcheria were dead. Help was no longer to be had in Byzantium. Her soul sought escape. The murderer Maximus held her prisoner. So the granddaughter of the philosopher Leontios, the great-granddaughter of Theodosios the Great, turned for refuge to the barbarian, Gaiseric.

But treason is never a solution.*

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One night the terrible Attila, king of the Huns, was killed by the beautiful woman who was lying in his embrace.* But like the Lernian hydra, another head took his place. The fearless leader of the Vandals, Gaiseric, had subdued Carthage and the Roman territories in Africa. Now, in May, 455, he disembarked in Italy and marched toward Rome. The Romans rose up and killed Maximus and Palladius, who were trying to escape.* Once more, Pope Leo moved toward the oncoming conqueror with a great procession. He pleaded with him to respect the city and the life of its people; he promised that Rome would then open its gates to him.

Gaiseric entered triumphantly. He destroyed neither the eternal city nor the life of its inhabitants. But in order to reward his troops, he decreed two weeks of pillage. What did he not take with him? What did he not load onto his ships? Money and precious objects of art, ecclesiastical treasures and the holy instruments of Jewish worship which Titus had brought from Jerusalem. With this loot, he took also Eudoxia and her two daughters and went back to Carthage. To his son Honorichus he gave as wife the young Eudocia, widow of Caesar Palladius, but he respected Placidia, who was married to the Roman patrician, Flavius Olybrius.*

CHAPTER XXII

In Jerusalem, the nails of this frightful news were driven straight into Eudocia's heart. The first blow was the murder of the Emperor. In what danger must her unprotected daughter be now! A young woman without a husband on the tottering throne of the West, surrounded by bestial ambitions—how could she cope with it all by herself? As for the young princesses, they had lost their father at the most critical period of their lives. Being far away, Athenais did not know of all Valentinian's misdeeds,* nor of the reasons for his murder. Both her grief and her anxiety were very great.

But when the swift messenger fell in exhaustion at her feet and said, "The barbarians are in Rome, the Vandals are in Rome," her blood froze. She dared not ask questions. In despair she learned that her daughter and her granddaughters were the conqueror's booty, that the young Eudocia was the wife of the Arian Vandal.* Her mind could not even conceive it. Nothing was any longer in its place. She was suffering unmercifully for all she loved most, for all that was most personal to her. She had lost her spirit, she had no reason to live.

Her thoughts of Eudocia were a nightmare. How would she live with this Vandal? Surely everything made him

odious to her: his manners, his habits, and that Arian heresy which was spreading more hatred than the difference of race.

A superhuman desire welled up in her, to embrace her children, to save them. This enforced impotence was unbearable. On whom could she lean? Who was she, far from her throne, without power? It seemed as if her destiny had become detached from herself and was there with her suffering loved ones. She followed their anxieties, their miseries. But she had to stay where she was, a sad effigy, useless, dead.

For what sin was God punishing her so cruelly? Was her insistence on monophysitism perhaps a fatal mistake? Were her personal convictions a superfluous luxury? As Empress Eudocia was she obliged to be only concerned with the tranquility of Christ's Church? A cry for help rose from the depth of her being. But who could help her?

In her desperation she thought of St. Symeon Stylites as a refuge. St. Symeon was a living saint, known throughtout the Christian world. He lived near Jerusalem. As a child he had left his flocks and had become an ascetic of severe discipline and training. He was the first to have the inspiration of building a column on which to live. Thus he avoided the suppliants who wanted to touch him. Up there on his column, he felt himself closer to God. As soon as he conquered his dizziness, he would make his column still higher.*

He prayed night and day with his arms stretched toward the infinite. His body had become so transparent that it shone in the light as if it were itself light. In his shadow worshipers felt that a spirit was blessing them and sheltering them from trials. The

faithful brought him what little food he required.* In ecclesiastical matters his influence was great. Emperors and patriarchs had asked him to mediate for the pacification of the Church. His miracles were known throughout the world.

Athenais Eudocia wrote to St. Symeon about her doubts, her hesitations.* And the saint answered her with trembling hands also in Greek: "Know, my child, that the Devil, seeing the wealth of your virtues, is determined to plunder you like the grain, and that ravager, Theodosios,* receptacle and instrument of the Evil-Doer, has clouded and confused your soul beloved of God. But take courage. Your faith is not lacking. I have marvelled greatly at this, that, having a well-spring near and not knowing it, you try to bring water from afar. You have the godly Euthemios. Follow therefore his teachings and admonitions, and you will be saved."

Augusta Eudocia read and re-read this letter. She tried to carry out the command which it contained. She had heard of St. Euthemios.* He was a most respected anchorite, the leader of monastic life in Palestine. His monastery was near Jerusalem. With his followers he helped greatly in the re-establishment of Orthodoxy. He had never recognized the usurping bishop, Theodosios. He was already an old man when Eudocia went to him. He welcomed her with full Christian love which does not judge, but only seeks to help.

Athenais questioned him, and above all she listened to him. He did not try to persuade her; there was nothing fanatical about him. "Men with their words obscure God's words," he wanted to say. The old man

expressed a sweetness, a submissiveness, a deep faith, a sanctity. Often he seemed, within his solitude, to be transported, to be waiting at the feet of the unseen Christ for the moment when he would gaze on Him. His face lit up in ecstasy. Again he spoke: "As men, with imperfect mind, we cannot conceive God. As men, with imperfect faith, with imperfect love we draw nearer to Him. He rejects inquiry, and asks for love. As do we who are made in His image."

It came to Athenais that her great sin was *hubris*. She had exceeded the mean. In spite of her dedication to Jesus, in spite of all her works of love, arrogance still nested in her soul. She thought that she had acquired all knowledge. She must be redeemed. What ideas were worth the price of great human suffering? She had not achieved the humility of Socratic agnosticism. Was this then the help she was seeking?

She wished to see St. Euthemios every day. They met often. In the desert she built a wooden tower where they saw each other regularly.

Suddenly she was overwhelmed with a deep understanding, a wisdom by which perfect simplicity completely mastered difficulties, fear and evil. Everything became easy. She was reconciled with her old friend and later opponent, Patriarch Juvenal. There was no longer any dissent in her. In 456 she returned to the Orthodox Church.

* * * * *

The messages from her children were few and far between. She had difficulty in sending her own. Gaiseric respected and honored both Empress Eudoxia and Placidia, the wife of the Roman Olybrius. But he kept

them always prisoners. The most unfortunate among them was Eudocia, wife of Gaiseric's son.* She could not be resigned to living always in Carthage, tied to a fanatical Arian. Honorichus had no respect for the feelings of his deeply Orthodox wife and he persecuted the Orthodox mercilessly. She dreamed of Jerusalem and longed to be there with Athenais. What a strong attraction, what an affinity existed between the two Eudocias who had never seen each other!

Athenais wrote to Emperor Marcian,* begging him to intervene and ask Gaiseric to release the daughter of Theodosios and her royally-born children. Marcian sent an embassy to Gaiseric and with great insistence asked for the prisoners, but he did not win their liberation.*

Athenais concealed her despair. No one would comprehend it. In order to live she had to forget. She would begin to build the Church of St. Stephen which she recalled vividly, there beside the walls she loved.

* * * * *

But Athenais Eudocia had within herself a genuine source of life, compassion and joy: poetry. People and problems, unavoidable and unbearable, all these had betrayed her. If anything remained after God, it was poetry in its widest meaning. But in order to find the truth of the word, the expression, she had to go back to herself, to weigh it against her sorrow, her burned-out spirit.

The rhythm of a verse was always going round and round inside her. Ideas came and came again, and started always from the depths, from the substance of the

outside world. Perhaps she owed to poetry this just scale of values which she had as Empress.

When she was newly married, as a gift to Theodosios, she had sung the triumphs of his army in verse. Now that the cycle of her life was drawing to a close, now that she was wise from her long service, she began to write again. Her faith in Christ dominated her; her subjects were all religious. As she herself said, she wanted to add grace to the telling of the sacred stories.

She wrote the life of Christ from the Annunciation to the Ascension in Homeric verse (Homerokaentra). She translated into verse whole sections of the Old Testament: the Books of Moses, Hosea, Judges, Ruth, the prophets Zachariah and Daniel. Four centuries later, the wise Patriarch Photios would praise the work of Athenais. But her best poem was about the life of St. Cyprian of Antioch.

"All ye who suffer because of the mystical belief in the much-hymned Christ, behold my many tears and learn why my sorrow is so great; you will understand because I speak the truth."*

Eudocia brought together the myths of Syria about St. Cyprian. Cyprian was a famous magician in Antioch. A pagan, Aglaidas, was in love with a beautiful Christian maiden, Justina, and he appealed for help in conquering the heart of his beloved. The magician agreed, because he himself was not indifferent to the charms of the young woman. So he unleashed against her all the demons and all the temptations. But the Christian Justina quietly made the sign of the Cross, and all the evil spirits fell powerless at her feet and then disappeared. The wise magician was astounded by the power of Christ. He burned his books of magic and divided his

goods among the poor. Now he loved Justina with a heavenly love. Before he himself became a Christian, he made a public confession. Perhaps the most beautiful part of the work was this humble confession which he made to the crowds gathered before him. He explained how he had erred by being initiated into the vain religion of the ancient Greeks, how later he broke in pieces the idols of the gods. As we listen to the story of Cyprian's life, it is as if we are hearing the life of Athenais herself. This text pulses with truth.

Satan was the fallen archangel. His face was like a flower of pure gold which shone in the flame of his eyes. His crown shone with precious stones. Around his thone the whole army of demons ready to fight with God. Satan ironically said to the victim who wanted to escape, "Christ shall not take you from my hands because he does not accept those who have once followed me." In terror, Cyprian asked the people, "I have told you my life story. Tell me whether I can move Jesus, whether He will hear my prayer." This epic recalls Dante and Milton, and in the fifth century it was a revelation.

All Eudocia's religious suffering came to life in the poem of Cyprian. It showed the breadth of her sensitivity, her openness to all that was worthwhile, to Homer and to Aeschylus, but also to the legends of her own period which expressed the collective spiritual longing.

She searched no further. She accepted Christ, that is all. What would man be, reduced to nothing by his tragic temporality and weakness, without his belief in God?

All spoke with certainty. She listened to them doubtfully. How sure they were!

CHAPTER XXIII

The years rolled by. Days became weeks. Empress Eudocia wrote, and waited for good news from her daughter. She became more and more oppressed by her unfulfilled expectation.

Other news arrived in Jerusalem. Kyros had abandoned his compulsory bishopric and had become a private citizen. His sick daughter, Alexandra, had been cured by Daniel the Stylite.* His verses about Daniel circulated in the city.

"Between earth and heaven stands a fearless man, beaten by winds from all sides. His name is Daniel. He vies with the great Symeon who fixes his footprints on a double column. Richly he is nourished by hunger and thirst without blood while he proclaims the Son of the Virgin Mother."*

The fallen queen heard the name of Kyros with a secret joy. Who could say, if he had not built the walls, what Vandals would then be in Constantinople?

* * * * *

Waiting was a deep well which swallowed up her days. In the evening at sunset her grief choked her. She herself was dying, but she felt that the most wonderful world was dying with her, the world of free man. The silence deepened. The cycle was coming to a close.

Memories of former happiness, of that first glory,

were all around her. Her wedding in St. Stephen's, the royal capital, Theodosios, Paulinos.

Where was it coming from, that sea breeze which caressed her? From Athens, from Constantinople? Surely from Carthage. That pain of longing in her soul, it could not be that it did not touch God.

* * * * *

In her third homeland, Jerusalem, Athenais-Eudocia built her tomb beside the Church of St. Stephen, near the walls. With effort she followed the work, and in 460 it was ready to be consecrated.

She knew now that nothing further remained for her on this earth. Life was running out, water through her fingers. How she longed to see a beloved face near her!

Her beautiful countenance transfigured within the frame of her silver hair, her blue eyes made large by weakness, seas which shone in the sun, she lay motionless. In the warmth of her bed she felt as if she were on a raft on the infinite ocean of time. Memories, plans, dreams, works, loves—she did not know what had become of them. A unique consciousness, infinitesimal in the midst of chaos, at the mercy of God.

From her open window how the Cross shone!

"Lord Christ, Thou art generous. Thou gavest me intellect and beauty. Thou gavest me also a thirst for righteousness. Thou gavest me love. For these I have suffered. Only Thou knowest my Golgotha. Now I am too weary to lift up my heavy soul. Life is running out. I am plunging into the final night. Lord Christ, let me waken in the sunlight of Thy justice."

In Jerusalem, in October of the same year, Athenais Eudocia passed quietly away.*

CHAPTER XXIV

In 471 the young Eudocia fulfilled her dream and longing of nineteen years; she escaped and at last arrived, a fugitive, in Jerusalem. Eagerly she sought out the queen's tomb. Finally, at the Church of St. Stephen, she found it and embraced it passionately.

A tremor passed through the sacred bones of Athenais, there within the soil. The warmth of the mystical love which united the two worlds wrapped her soul as it rested at the feet of God.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

Page 2: Eutropios, a favorite of the Emperor Arcadios and his wife Eudoxia, was responsible for many crimes and treacheries.

Page 4: The Goth Gainas then demanded the execution of Eutropios, and Arcadios signed the condemnation. Eutropios sought refuge in the Church, asking for protection from John Chrysostom. The Patriarch offered it freely, with his famous speech, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Where are the brilliant garments of consulship and the cheering at the hippodrome and the flattery of the spectators?"

Page 5: George Cedrenos, *Historiarum Compendium*, I (Bonn, 1838), 576.

Page 6, Note 1: Synesios, "Oratio de Regno," in *MPG* 66, col. 1056BC.

Page 6, Note 2: Synesios was born in Cyrene, in North Africa, about A.D. 370. Cyrene was built as a Greek colony in the seventh century B.C. by citizens of Thera, who were themselves Dorian colonists from Sparta. It was the home country of the philosophers Aristippos and Carneades.

Page 6, Note 3: Synesios, cols. 1088C - 1092B.

Page 7, Note 1: Ibid., p. 1399.

Page 7, Note 2: The barbarians in question were Libyans. They were also called Berbers and Moors. The Byzantines called them Mauritians. They were Christianized during the reign of Justinian. Theophanes mentions that the Mauritians were Phoenicians expelled by Jesus of Navi.

Page 7, Note 3: Synesios, *Epistle* 124, *MPG* 66, col. 1504.

Page 7, Note 4: The cowardly representative of the king was living in his ships, after first transporting there all the possessions of the taxpayers. He was ready to leave at the slightest indication of danger. Synesios writes: "Not at the ramparts of the city like me, Synesios, but at the oars the general stands."

Page 8: Around 413.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

Page 9, Note 1: The Byzantine Christian governments did not dare touch the educational establishments of the then poor city of Athens, as they constituted its sole source of income.

Page 9, Note 2: This legend sprang from the fact that Alaric spared the city of Pallas Athena.

Page 9, Note 3: The Athenian Plutarch, son of Nestorios, died in A.D. 432 at an advanced age, a venerated teacher. He analyzed with equal zeal the Platonic and Aristotelian texts. He wrote much, but only a small part of his writings has been preserved. It mainly concerns psychology, which he analyzed carefully on the basis of Plato and Aristotle.

Page 10: Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* iv, 26 in *MPG* 67, col. 529A.

Page 11: At the time Asclepios was greatly venerated in Athens. He was called the Savior. His temple was situated at the south end of the Acropolis. Plutarch and Syrianos, the Neo-Platonists, were living between the Asclepion and the temple of Dionysos. Later, Proclos, their successor, lived there too.

Page 12, Note 1: Ioannis Malalas, *Chronographia*, xiv (Bonn, 1831), p. 353.

Page 12, Note 2: *Chronicon Paschale*, I (Bonn, 1832), 576.

CHAPTER III

Page 14: Cedrenos, I, 586.

Page 15, Note 1: Socrates, vii.2, 25 in *MPG* 67, cols. 741, 793.

Page 15, Note 2: Flacilla, the first-born, was dead.

Page 15, Note 3: "De fide et virginitate."

Page 16: Socrates, vii.1, cols. 740-741.

Page 18, Note 1: Cedrenos, I, 600.

Page 18, Note 2: The *Suda Lexicon* writes about Pulcheria: "Daughter of Arcadius, princess aged 15, she knew well how to govern the kingodm and also taught her brother Theodosius; being erudite and the possessor of a divine mind, she offered her own virginity to God and taught

her sisters to do the same and as regards her brother she guided him in everything, including his way of thinking and his way of speaking, his manner of walking and laughing, and how to dress and sit and keep a royal attitude."

Page 18, Note 3: Malalas, p. 352.

Page 18, Note 4: Ibid., p. 353.

Page 19: Christodoros of the Egyptian Coptus describes the famous baths of Zeuxippos in A.D. 500.

Page 20: Scarlatos Byzantios, *Constantinople*, I (Athens, 1851-1863), 355.

Page 22: Malalas, p. 354.

Page 24, Note 1: Ibid.

Page 24, Note 2: Cedrenos, pp. 586-87.

Page 25, Note 1: Charles Delvoye, *L'art byzantin* (Paris, 1967), p. 62.

Page 25, Note 2: It is unlikely that Athenais was older than Theodosios. If it had been so, Pulcheria would not have suggested the marriage. Nicephoros is correct when he considers her of the same age as the Emperor.

CHAPTER IV

Page 28: St. John 8:32. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Page 29, Note 1: According to the *Suda Lexicon* Eudoxia means 'benevolent glory' and Eudocia 'the benevolent will of God.' Athenais, out of modesty, chose the second. There are coins in existence bearing the name Aelia Eudoxia; these concern the wife of Arcadios. Those with the name Aelia Eudocia concern Athenais.

Page 29, Note 2: The sacred, the great palace was built by Constantine the Great to cover the whole length of the hippodrome from St. Sophia to the sea. It consisted of many pavilions and palaces, churches and gates. Constantine the Great lived in the Palace of Daphne where in 428 Pulcheria reconstructed the church of the early martyr St. Stephen in order to place there the sacred relic of his hand. The palace of Magna Aula was also

built within the sacred palace. The "Chalcis" building, where the officials and soldiers who guarded the palace day and night lived, stood near the entrance to the palace.

Page 30, Note 1: *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 578.

Page 30, Note 2: For the coronation and acclamation of a Byzantine Augusta see Constantine Pophyrogenitos, *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, chap. 49 (40), 50 (41), ed. A. Vogt, II (Paris, 1939), 11-23.

Page 32: *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 579.

CHAPTER V

Page 33: "You were crowned from the sky, my Lords, by the hand of the Invincible."

Page 34, Note 1: Socrates, vii.18, cols. 773-777.

Page 34, Note 2: Sozomenos, *Ecclesiastical History*, Preface, ed. J. Bidez; and G.C. Hansen, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1960), pp. 1-3.

Page 35, Note 1: Socrates, vii.22, cols. 784-788.

Page 35, Note 2: It was said that the lamp of Theodosios was made with such skill that it fed itself with oil.

Page 36, Note 1: It was customary for poets to compose encomia for the Emperor at the Byzantine Court; he compensated them with golden coins, icons, gifts.

Page 36, Note 2: Constantine Porphyrogenitos, pp. 13-14, 19-22.

CHAPTER VI

Page 38: *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. Mommsen (Berlin, 1905), XVI, 10, 4, 23.

Page 40, Note 1: The famous Cyrus (Kyros), as praefectus of the city and of the praetorium, first published his decrees in Greek, influenced by Eudocia. In 439 the order, "In Greek you shall deliberate" was established. The Greek language became generally accepted in the public services.

Page 40, Note 2: The Church helped greatly in bringing about the linguistic unity of Byzantium.

Page 41: Formerly there were private collections of Gregory and Hermogenes.

NOTES

CHAPTER VII

Page 43, Note 1: Cedrenos, p. 588.

Page 43, Note 2: Olympiodoros, *Excerpta* (Bonn, 1829), pp. 456-58.

Page 44: Ibid., pp. 464-65.

CHAPTER VIII

Page 47: Philebus, 27, B, 5: "The first, then, I call infinite, the second limited or finite, and the third something generated by a mixture of these two. And should I be making any mistake if I called the cause of this mixture and creation the fourth?" (H.N. Fowler)

Page 48: He was a pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the main representative of the Antiochian School of Antioch.

Page 49, Note 1: Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, ed. C. de Boor (Lipsiae, 1963), 98-100.

CHAPTER IX

Page 54: Socrates, vii.44, cols. 833-836.

CHAPTER X

Page 58: Sappho, ii.44.

Page 59, Note 1: Homeric hymn III to the Delian Apollo:
ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὔμμιν ἀνὴρ ἥδιστος ἀοιδῶν ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καί τέω τέρπεσθε μάλιστα; ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ἀποκρίνασθ' ἀμφ' ἠμέων; τυφός ἀνήρ, οἰκεῖ δέ Χίῳ ἔνι παιπαλοέσση τοῦ πάλαι μετόπισθεν ἀριστεύουσιν ἀοιδαί.

Page 59, Note 2: Pindar, 7th Olympic: " *Διαγόρα Ροδίῳ " βλάστε μέν ἐξ ἀλός ὑγρᾶς νᾶσος, ἔχει τε μιν ὀδειᾶν ὁ γενέθλως ἀκτίνων πατήρ, πῦρ πνεόντων ἀρχός ἵππων.*

Page 59, Note 3: Seleucia, the harbor of Antioch, was 22 kilometers from the city.

Page 60, Note 1: Malalas, p. 200.

Page 60, Note 2: Ibid., pp. 201, 202.

Page 62, Note 1: Acts 2:26. In Judaea this name could not be used because Christ meant Messiah.

NOTES

Page 62, Note 2: Three more communities were built; they were so huge that they were considered separate cities and each had its own walls. It was for this reason that Antioch was called Tetrapolis (the Quadruple City).

Page 64: *Chronicon Paschale,* p. 585.

CHAPTER XII

Page 67: He lived in Bethlehem from 385 and died there in 420. He reviewed and corrected the Latin translation of the Holy Bible. He built two convents, a church and a hostel at Bethlehem. He was also the head of a monastery.

Page 69: Michel Join-Lambert, *Jerusalem* (Paris, 1957), p. 90.

Page 71: *Chronicon Paschale,* p. 585.

CHAPTER XIII

Page 72, Note 1: Cedrenos, p. 590.

Page 72, Note 2: Mentioned by Marcelinus. Athenais was baptized there.

Page 73: Initially the church bore the name Titulus Eudoxia. With these chains King Herod bound St. Peter.

Page 74, Note 1: *Codex Theodosianus,* ii.93. For Kyros see Demetrios J. Constantelos, "Kyros Panopolites, Rebuilder of Constantinople," *Greek-Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12.3 (1971), 451-64.

Page 74, Note 2: Malalas, p. 361.

Page 75: Auguste Bailly, *Byzance,* p. 34. But cf. Constantelos, pp. 452-53.

CHAPTER XIV

Page 77: Malalas, p. 355.

CHAPTER XV

Page 80, Note 1: Georgius Codinus, *De Aedificiis,* ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1843), p. 112.

Page 80, Note 2: The *Chronicon Paschale,* p. 584, written 120 years later, mentions only one trip of Athenais to Jerusalem.

NOTES

Page 80, Note 3: Panaghia Mavriotissa at Castoria.

Page 82, Note 1: Theophanes, I,99.

Page 82, Note 2: Some later chronographers, including Theophanes, write of a love affair involving Pulcheria, Paulinos and Eudocia. They write that Pulcheria gave up Paulinos to Eudocia and retired to the Seventh. Thus the eunuch Chrysaphios had the opportunity to accuse Eudocia. It is obvious from the vagueness of the story and the mistaken chronology that it is untrue. At the time of the Eutychian heresy, when Pulcheria retired to the Seventh, Eudocia was in Jerusalem. It is probable that Paulinos was in love with Athenais, but we cannot ignore the queen's deathbed confession in Jerusalem that she was innocent.

Page 84: Sophocles, *Antigone*, 523.

CHAPTER XVI

Page 85: *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 588.

Page 86, Note 1: Malalas, pp. 361-62.

Page 86, Note 2: A church office was often a sentence.

Page 87: *Palatine Anthology* ix.136. Cyrus the great poet composed the lament at the gate of the Acropolis while he was making ready to leave as an exile. Also, the ix.134 is attributed to Cyrus and not to Pallas the Alexandrian.

Page 88: Malalas, p. 362. Cf. Constantelos, pp. 454-56 and Timothy E. Gregory, "The Remarkable Christmas Homily of Kyros Panopolites," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16.3 (1975), 317-24.

CHAPTER XVII

Page 89, Note 1: Malalas, p. 363.

Page 89, Note 2: *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 585.

Page 90: Psalm 42:1.

Page 93, Note 1: Cedrenos, p. 602.

Page 93, Note 2: Priscus Panites, *Excerpta* (Bonn, 1829), p. 208 is one source regarding the killing of the count. Priscus

relates how in 488 Attila sent ambassadors to Constantinople demanding among others the wealthy daughter of Saturninus for a wife for his own representative Constantius. And Priscus adds: "and Saturninus was killed by Athenais also called Eudocia; for she bore both names." But Priscus, a friend of Theodosios, without ever having been to Jerusalem just repeats the rumor which circulated at the palace four years after the events. Nobody bothered to check it. Nobody explains or knows how the murderer met with his death. The chronographers Cedrenos, Malalas, and the *Chronicon Paschale* do not so much as mention Saturninus. It is easy to attribute the deed to the powerful person to whom the two murdered churchmen belonged, especially when this person is the object of slander.

Page 93, Note 3: *Ibid.*

Page 94: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 958.

Page 96: Join-Lambert, p. 100: "La bienheureuse Eudocie, dit un contemporain, construisit pour le Christ un grand nombre d'églises et tant de monastères et d'hospices pour les pauvres et les vieillards que je ne saurais les énumérer."

CHAPTER XVIII

Page 99, Note 1: Theophanes, I,98.

Page 99, Note 2: "The body of the Lord is human but not of the same substance as ours because I know He is our God." One of the teachings of Eutyches, noted in the documents of his trial.

Page 100: *"Duae naturae et substantiae in unam personam."*

Page 101, Note 1: See letter of Theodosios to Valentinian III in *Epistol. Leonis*, No. LXII.

Page 101, Note 2: Pope Leo called it extortionate (*latrocinium ephesinum*).

CHAPTER XIX

Page 102: Malalas, p. 366.

Page 103, Note 1: Constantine Porphyrogenitos, II,84.

NOTES

Page 103, Note 2: Jean Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos, Traité des Offices,* p. 284.

Page 104, Note 1: Cedrenos, p. 603.

Page 104, Note 2: *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XX

Page 108: *Opera Leonis Magni*, Ballerini, i, p. 1209. Epistle LXVI to Eudocian Augustam ad VII of the Julian Calendar.

CHAPTER XXI

Page 110: Theophanes, I, 93-85.

Page 111, Note 1: *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 587.

Page 111, Note 2: The ancient Ticinum.

Page 113: Theophanes, I,108.

Page 114: Cedrenos, p. 605; Theophanes, p. 168.

Page 115, Note 1: Malalas, p. 359.

Page 115, Note 2: Theophanes, I, 108.

Page 115, Note 3: *Ibid.*, 109.

CHAPTER XXII

Page 116, Note 1: Cedrenos, p. 605.

Page 116, Note 2: The Goths and the Vandals were Arians.

Page 117: St. Symeon's memorial is preserved between Chalepa and Antioch, 59 kilometers from Chalepa.

Page 118, Note 1: A very beautiful hymn to Symeon the Stylite can be found in Paul Maas and C.A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi*; see *Cantica Dubia* (Berlin, 1970), p. 72: "Which human language can ever suffice to describe the blameless life of Simeon?"

Page 118, Note 2: *Life of Saint Simeon* by Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrus.

Page 118, Note 3: This refers to Theodosios the Monophysite who proclaimed himself Bishop of Jerusalem.

Page 118, Note 4: There exists a biography of him by Cyril of Skythopolis: "Life of St. Euthemios," in *MPG* 114, col. 677.

NOTES

Page 120, Note 1: Cedrenos, p. 606.

Page 120, Note 2: Leo the Great reigned after Marcian. It was he who paid the ransom to Gaiseric and liberated Augusta Eudoxia and Placidia, who also eventually became Empress of Rome. The younger Eudocia ran away later.

Page 120, Note 3: Priscus Panites, p. 216.

Page 121: A. Ludwich, *Eudociae Augustae, Procli Lycii, Claudiani, Carmin. Graecae* (Leipzig, 1897).

CHAPTER XXIII

Page 123, Note 1: "Vita S. Danieli Stylitae," *Analecta Bollandiana* 32 (1913), 150.

Page 123, Note 2: *Ibid.*

Page 124: Cedrenos, p. 607.

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